

# The Northern Line to High Reality via Bank

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# Preface

The purpose of this book is to encourage the reader to have a deeper understanding of the ‘realities’ of daily life. It does so by introducing the Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma translates as ‘higher reality’ and is from the Theravāda teachings of Buddhism.

In 1978 I was given a Buddhist book *Abhidhamma in Daily Life*<sup>1</sup> by a friend. Within the first 10 or so pages, I understood that there was a possibility of another way of understanding the world and a different way of studying the world. I understood that this other way was of great benefit. In 1994, I started a publishing company to make this and other books available. That company is now publishing as Zolag and I link to many of my free resources in this book.

## Disclaimer

This is my personal reflection on this path to the understanding of reality. I have included many links to external resources. This is not meant to infer that the authors are in agreement with what I write. The views expressed here are mine only.

---

<sup>1</sup>An exposition of all realities in detail. The prefix “abhi” is used in the sense of “preponderance” or “distinction”. “Abhidhamma” means “higher dhamma” or “dhamma in detail”. (Nina van Gorkom 2010a, preface.)

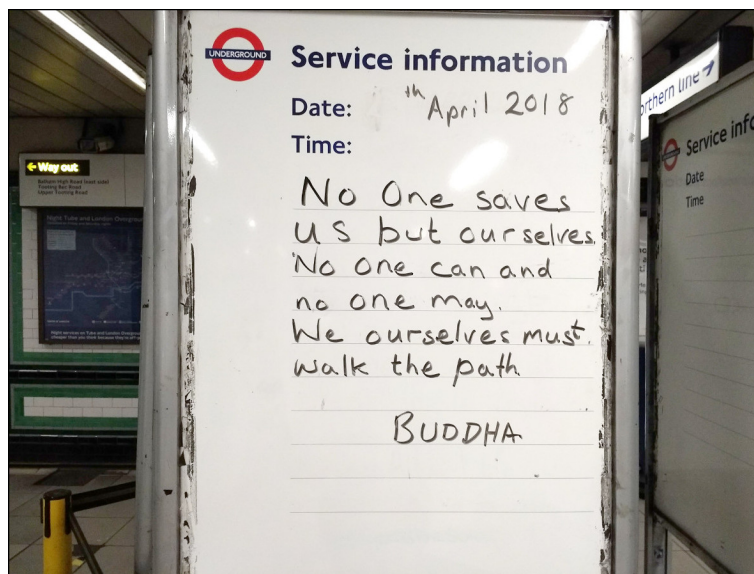


Figure 1: 'Thought for the day' sign at the entrance to Tooting Bec tube station. See MORDEN DEPOT

# Introduction

The Tube: grimy, smelly, crowded, necessary and efficient. There were about 294 million passenger journeys recorded in 2016/17 on the Northern Line, making it the busiest on the Underground (Northern line, 2019). We could perhaps describe the tube as a bitter remedy for transport.

Emerging from this grime are some enlightening quotes that the TFL (Transport for London) staff have placed at the entrance to some of the stations (Figure 1). It as if they are preparing the traveller for something deeper and higher. Many travellers like the quotes, they stop and take pictures, including myself. Blogs, social media, websites have been set up to share the quotes. The quotes embrace fundamental truths about life, about the world. They stimulate us to deeper thought and deeper reflection. But can we progress to a 'higher dream', a higher reality from the quotes?

I have used the Northern Line on a daily commute for seven years. However, I understand that there is also another journey which can be undertaken each day. The journey to the 'direct understanding' of reality as it is. This is a solitary journey, something that you yourself have to undertake, others can just point the way (MORDEN DEPOT). As I read these quotes, I often reflect on that journey and the relevance of the quotes to that journey. The purpose of this book is to share my reflection with you and to point you to a rich set of free resources that I have available. I am using these quotes as a trigger to progress you, the reader, to a 'higher reality'.

The perfect understanding of reality as it is. This goal, this higher 'dream' (MORDEN) is something to be gradually understood. My role is not to explain this journey, my resources will do that, but to prepare you for this journey and to enable the resources necessary for this journey.

## Not all physics is physics

Not all science is physics. We have chemistry and biology. Not all physics is physics? There is another way of understanding the world. Physics means 'knowledge of nature' from Ancient Greek (Anon 2018 Physics).

Consider this description of Brent Cross Tube station

It has Greek like columns and has metal railings on top. The main entrance is on the right as you approach. It is quite low and wide. Now turn to the page BRENT CROSS. Seeing the Brent Cross photo

is a lot more knowledge than the description of it. 'A picture is worth a thousand words'. Now consider the below.

If we take the word **heat**, this word represents an absolute reality (from now on highlighted in blue) which can be directly experienced through the body-sense as **hot** or **cold**. We do not have to call it by any name. In science, we understand temperature as the average kinetic energy of the molecules. However, this is **thinking** about the temperature, not the direct experience of **temperature**.

Science NEVER studies reality directly, only concepts about reality. It is this 'thing' called **mindfulness** which studies reality directly. If there is the study of reality there will be more **understanding** of it. Science has its domain of understanding, but this domain is never the characteristic of reality by direct experience.

Another example. **Sound**. Physics understands **sound** as caused by the vibration of objects or the air. This is thinking about the **sound**. However the word **sound** represents a reality that can be heard right now. You do not have to call it by any name. It has a unique characteristic different from **taste**, different from **heat** different from **smell**.

How many objects can you **touch**? There are only three! **Hardness** or **softness**, **motion** or **pressure**, **hot** or **cold**. We have a deeply rooted idea that something is **touched**, the computer, the table, a person. The body is only sensitive to these first three objects. The rest is **thinking**. This is realities first lie see MORDEN DEPOT.

**Mindfulness** studies reality directly. When there is **mindfulness** a reality appears clearer than before. In this way, direct **understanding** of it will develop.

Of course, this cannot be understood in a few paragraphs but there are many more resources here to enable you to understand. By replacing the object of **understanding** from a concept to a reality, we are turbocharging the **understanding** of reality. We, therefore, have another way of developing **understanding** of reality by direct experience with **mindfulness**. This is a type of physics because it is the study of reality at the present moment. It is 'knowledge of nature'.

All of the understanding we have gained so far from university, from the media from school is intellectual understanding. This type of understanding has a concept as it's object of understanding, not a reality.

What does this different type of direct **understanding** result in? You cannot go to the moon with it. You cannot make a mobile phone with it. You cannot cure physical diseases with it. It brings about **detachment** from the idea of self and a lessening of **attachment** to the objects in and around us. This, in turn, will mean less suffering. No amount of science, no amount of philosophy, no amount of critical **thinking** can **detach** from taking realities for self. To be stuck with just the intellect is to be imprisoned by the 'person pack' (Gorkom, 2019, p.30), imprisoned by, I **see**, my foot, my car. We will suffer and cause suffering to others because of this **attachment** to the idea of self.

Two analogies:

- There are many different types of land transport: train, bus, car, bicycle. This is like **intellectual**



understanding. Air transport is like direct [understanding](#).

- The flying bird casts a shadow on the ground. The shadow is like [intellectual](#) understanding. The bird is like direct [understanding](#).

In order to progress on this path to direct [understanding](#) we need to leave science completely behind, at least temporarily, but take one fundamental principal from it, namely that all phenomena in life are conditioned (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, p.38). [Heat](#) is conditioned, [seeing](#) is conditioned, [anger](#) is conditioned, [kindness](#) is conditioned.

## Preparing for the journey

When commuting on the tube each day it is good to prepare for this journey. We might [listen](#) to tube updates from Alexa. Choose the time when we travel, 15 minutes can make the difference between getting a seat and not getting a seat. A colleague of mine gets the tube in the other direction to get a seat and come back again. People who complain about crowded trains are just lazy people! Just get up earlier! I myself wait at the front of the platform to ensure the interchange at Bank is efficient. I head for the glass panel as its easier to stand. I do not wear a coat as its too [hot](#). I carry an mp3 player.

In the same way, we need to prepare for this journey to [understand](#) reality. Who do we [listen](#) to? Who should we not [listen](#) to? How long will it take? Where do we go? What should we do? What qualities do we need to have? What misconceptions are there?

## Misconceptions

As we have seen this [understanding](#) of reality is a type of physics as such we can bring in some good practice in science education. Overcoming misconceptions in science. Around 99% of biology science teacher trainees<sup>2</sup> have misconceptions over weight in space. Around 20% of physics graduate specialists have misconceptions of Newton's third law<sup>3</sup> (see BRENT CROSS).

In order to overcome misconceptions, they need to be confronted. The trainee teachers need to [listen](#) to some 'knowledgeable other', someone who [understands](#) the misconception and who can articulate it to the rest of the group. It does not matter whether they are physics specialists or not, so long as they understand the problem. Physics is a difficult subject even at GCSE and it is normal and predictable that there will be many misconceptions. Now consider the below quote:

Against the stream (of common [thought](#)).  
Deep, subtle, fine, and hard to see,

---

<sup>2</sup>Data from hands up questioning at University of East London (UEL) teacher training sessions.

<sup>3</sup>Data from online subject knowledge tests conducted on physics graduate teacher training specialists from UEL.

Unseen it will be by [passion's](#) slaves  
cloaked in the murk of [ignorance](#)...

*The Buddha. (KS 1, V1)*

From this quote, we know that 99% plus of Buddhists must have misconceptions. This is just the way things work. How many misconceptions might there be after 2500 years? 20,000? How do we deal with this?

## Who do we listen to?

We need to [listen](#) to the teachings of the Buddha and not Buddhist teachers (see HENDON CENTRAL). Over time, misconceptions grow as Buddhists add their own interpretation or misconception to what he taught. The right [understanding](#) of the teachings is now very rare and almost extinct due to this epidemic of misconceptions. What did the Buddha say about this problem? Not to [listen](#) to the monks unless it agrees with the teachings. He did not appoint any monk to be his successor, but the teachings are the successor (*Dialogues of the Buddha 11, V1, 154*). This does not mean we do not [listen](#) to Buddhist monks or Buddhist lay teachers but it is each person's responsibility to check out what is said with the original teachings, the Tipiṭaka. Otherwise, we will go wrong.

Should we therefore just read the scriptures? The teachings are too difficult and subtle for the majority of us. We need the 'good friend' who can help us [understand](#) them.

Essentially, we just [listen](#) to the words which help us to [understand](#) the reality of 'whatever is now' and just consider whether the words are true or not.

## The path of detachment

The path to develop [understanding](#) must begin with [detachment](#) from the very beginning (see NINE ELMS). This is difficult and subtle. All of the [trying](#) we are used to is with [attachment](#). As soon as we [want](#) to [understand](#), we are off the path. If there is the idea that we are practising, we are again off the path. This is an [attachment](#) to the idea of someone who can do something.

Any practice involving going to a certain place at a certain time, or selecting an object or observing or watching is wrong development motivated by the idea of self. Each moment is conditioned including [understanding](#). We cannot have [understanding](#) at will. It is the [listening](#) and [considering](#) the teachings about realities which is the condition. No one practices, because there is no one, only different realities, mental and the physical arising by conditions.

The path is about [understanding](#) the present moment. The present moment is now, not a meditation session sometime Wednesday evening. This is [attachment](#) moving us away from the present moment.

This path to direct [understanding](#) of reality is long and difficult and you must accept that you can only get a tiny bit of [understanding](#), each day or week. Patience! The book is not arranged as a sequence

of lessons but is like a giant jigsaw puzzle where each piece slowly completes the picture one by one. If you get 10 blue sky pieces, try finding the corners first!

## How this book works?

This is a hybrid book. There are external links to my own free resources, audio, video and text, relevant to each quote. To make effective use of the book, an internet connection will be required to access the References for Further Study. There is also an online version where the links are clickable giving you instant access to a huge range of resources.

There are 52 pictures of tube stations and one of Morden Depot. The tube stations are assigned a quote which has been used on the Northern Line. The quotes were not necessarily at the Tube Station assigned. I have written a short reflection on each quote showing the relevance to the big dream, the direct [understanding](#) of reality. There are references for Further Study resources at the bottom of each page. Words in blue represent absolute realities to help you get used to this idea.

## How the photographs work?

The photographs are an aid to understanding reality in 8 ways. This is to be understood gradually. This development is a many lives task.

1. They are stripped of all colour except the Underground Sign. This represents the stripping out of concepts from reality. Each sutta or text about reality should be read in this context. E.g What is [touched](#) is [hardness](#), not a foot or table. What is [seen](#) is [visible object](#), not a tube station or person.
2. The stations are taken with different photo lenses. This is analogous to the different ways of studying reality I.e conceptually or with [mindfulness](#). A concept as the object of [understanding](#) or a reality?
3. A picture is worth a thousand words. The study of reality by direct experience is more informative than a description of it.
4. There is no tube station in the book, merely a picture. The shades and colour of the page condition the idea of a tube station. The process is the same even when we see a real tube station. What is [seen](#) is a reality, different from [sound](#), different from [heat](#), different from [taste](#). We cannot [see](#) a tube station, we perceive a tube station. The purpose of the development of the [understanding](#) of reality is to [understand](#) that there is no thing in what is [seen](#), [touched](#), [heard](#), [smelt](#) or [tasted](#). Neither is there a person who [sees](#), [hears](#), [touches](#).

5. The shutter on the camera is open for a very short length of time typically one-thirtieth of a second. In the same way, realities arise by a condition and fall away immediately in a split second. Nothing remains.
6. The photos are taken at dusk or dawn when the tube stations tend to dominate their surroundings. Usually, this is a time of only 15 minutes or so. In the same way, the opportunity to listen and consider these teachings on reality is very rare and will soon disappear.
7. If you study a picture of one tube say Brent Cross you may remember what the tube looks like at some later stage e.g when you see a tube map. This memory is beyond control it will happen at some time unknown. In the same way mindfulness, this study of reality is conditioned by the firm memory of the teachings. It is beyond control. Nobody can have it at will.
8. You flip the page of photo books or art books very quickly. We are never content with the pleasant objects for any length of time we are always searching for new pleasant experiences. This is a kind of suffering.

## 10 Big Ideas of Understanding Reality

1. It is conditioned to arise by the intellectual understanding of the Buddha's teachings about realities. No self can cause it to arise. Sitting cannot cause it to arise. Intention cannot cause it to arise. Quietness cannot cause it to arise. Trying cannot cause it to arise.
2. Mindfulness studies the realities of the world. Without mindfulness, it cannot develop.
3. Mindfulness "...is the sole way that leads to the purification of beings, to the utter passing beyond sorrow and grief, to the destruction of woe and lamentation..." (cited in Gorkom, 2019, chap.6)
4. In order for it to develop the object of understanding needs to be understood (a word in blue). This is a reality, not a concept e.g hardness not a foot. Visible object not a tube station.
5. It leads to detachment from the idea of self.
6. It is difficult and subtle to develop. It takes great patience to listen and consider over a long period of time.
7. It needs courage to give up the attachment to the idea of self.
8. There are many misconceptions. It is essential to understand the core of Abhidhamma (higher reality) in order for it develop.

9. There must be [detachment](#) from the very beginning. [Attachment](#) moves us away from the present moment.
10. The development of many wholesome qualities is required such as [kindness](#), [generosity](#), [compassion](#).



1

High Barnet via Bank



Figure 1.1: Dawn at MORDEN DEPOT



## Morden Depot

### Walking the path

Thought for the day

26th April 2018

“No One saves us but ourselves.  
No one can and no one may.  
We ourselves must walk the path.  
*Buddha*

”

‘Reality lies’ to us in the coffee shop, at work, at home, on the tube. That lie causes us to have [greed](#), [aversion](#) and [delusion](#). These in turn cause, or will cause, harm to ourselves and others. But by [understanding](#) this lie, by being ‘Straight’ to the reality of the present moment, little by little, it can be seen as it really is. It can be seen on the tube.<sup>1</sup>

‘Straight’ is the name that road is called, and ‘Free  
From [Fear](#)’ the Quarter whither thou art bound.  
The Chariot is the ‘Silent Runner’ named,  
With Wheels of Righteous [Effort](#) fitted well.  
[Conscience](#) the Leaning-board; the Drapery  
Is [Heedfulness](#); the Driver is the Norm,  
I say, and Right [Views](#), they that run before.  
And be it, woman, be it man for whom  
Such chariot doth wait, by that same car  
Into [Nibbāna](#)’s presence shall they come.  
*Kindred Sayings 1, Ch 1, paragraph 6*

### In a nutshell

You need to board this train, no one can board it for you.  
The driver of the train is Norm (the teachings)  
The tracks represent the right [understanding](#) of the teachings.

*Further study:* What is Buddhism? The Buddha’s Path, preface (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, p.1).

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<sup>1</sup>The tube quote appears to come from verse 276, The Dhammapada (The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom, 2019).

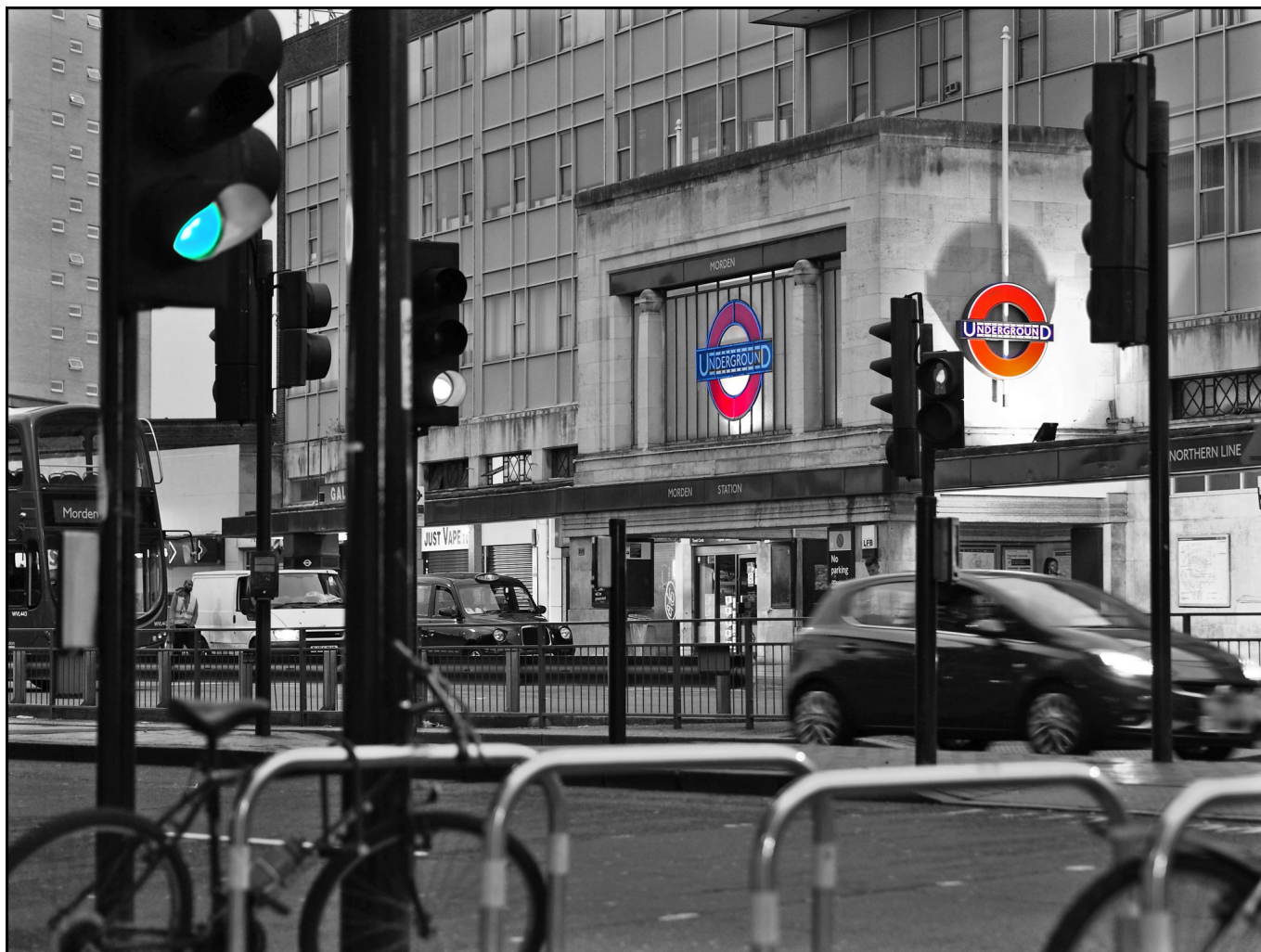


Figure 1.2: MORDEN

## Morden

### The Big Dream

Thought for the day  
Monday 2nd November 2015

“Dream no small dreams  
for they have no power  
to move hearts of men.  
*JW Von Goethe*”

What is the small dream? Enjoying [sights](#), [sounds](#), [touches](#), [tastes](#) and mind objects. What is a ‘Big Dream’? The direct [understanding](#) of reality as it. The reality of the present moment.

Wisdom is best, the good confess,  
like moon in starry sky.  
Virtue, fortune, righteousness  
are the attendants of the wise.

*No. 402. Sattubhastha-Jataka. The Jataka, Vol. III*

### In a nutshell

The ‘Big Dream’ is to [understand](#) the reality of present moment.  
Virtue is a helper for that ‘Big Dream’.

*Further study:* ADL Preface (Nina van Gorkom, 2010, p.1); Understanding Reality (Nina van Gorkom, 2010).



Figure 1.3: SOUTH WIMBLEDON

## South Wimbledon

### Food for thought

Thought for the day

June 20th 2018

“

Be cautious with what you feed your mind and soul.  
Fuel yourself with positivity and let that fuel  
propel you into positive action.

*Thoughts, Angel*

”

It appears that there is world with people, cars, trees, phones. However in reality there are 6 worlds, all quite separate from one another. There is the world of [seeing](#), [hearing](#), [touching](#), [tasting](#), [smelling](#) and [mind](#). We feed ourselves food and [enjoy tastes](#) through one doorway. However, in a way, we are eating through all the other doorways. We enjoy [objects](#) of [seeing](#), [sounds](#), [touches](#), [smelling](#) and [thinking](#). This constant feeding of the 6 doorways (with [attachment](#)) can cause us to get fat physically and mentally. Mentally by not sharing what we have or by selfish [speech](#) and [actions](#). So how can we fuel ourselves with positivity and positive action?

Not to do evil, to cultivate good,  
to purify one's mind,  
this is the teaching of the Buddhas.

*Dhammapada 183 (cited by Nina van Gorkom, 2011, p.83)*

### In a nutshell

We are in a constant feeding of experiences through 6 doorways.  
This accumulates, little by little and we can become fat physically and mentally.  
We can reflect on this and cultivate going in the opposite direction.

*Further study:* The Buddha's Path p83 (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, p.83)





Figure 1.4: COLLIERS WOOD

## Colliers Wood

### Give it a try

Thought for the day

29th September 2015

“Its impossible  
Said pride  
Its risky said experience  
Its pointless  
Said reason  
Give it a try whispered the heart  
*Unknown*

”

“There is really nothing better in life to do than to find out what life is all about. Wise people cannot live just for pleasure. The wise one will live with pleasure and with [understanding](#)’.

Understanding the realities of life better will not harm you, indeed it will gradually eke out the cause of suffering. There is nothing to lose. You can live your normal daily life as before but have a tiny amount more [understanding](#) day to day. We read in Buddhism in Daily Life (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, p.1):

Through the study of the Buddha’s teachings, which are also called the “Dhamma”, we learn to develop the wisdom which leads to [detachment](#) from the “self” and finally to the eradication of [greed](#), [hatred](#) and [ignorance](#). When there is less attachment in our life, there is more room for unselfish [loving kindness](#) and [compassion](#) for all living beings.

The way one has to follow in order to develop this wisdom is the “Eightfold Path”. Through the development of the Eightfold Path we come to know better the phenomena within and around ourselves; these phenomena can be experienced through the six doorways of [eyes](#), [ears](#), [nose](#), [tongue](#), [body-sense](#) and [mind](#). They are continually susceptible to change and they are impermanent. What we take for “I” or “self” all the time does not exist; there are only phenomena which arise and fall away again.

### In a nutshell

There is nothing better to do in life than [understand](#) what life is.

This can be developed in everyday life.

[Understanding](#) will not [harm](#) you and will over time make life easier.

Give it a try.

*Further study:* Preface to Buddhism in Daily Life (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, p.1)

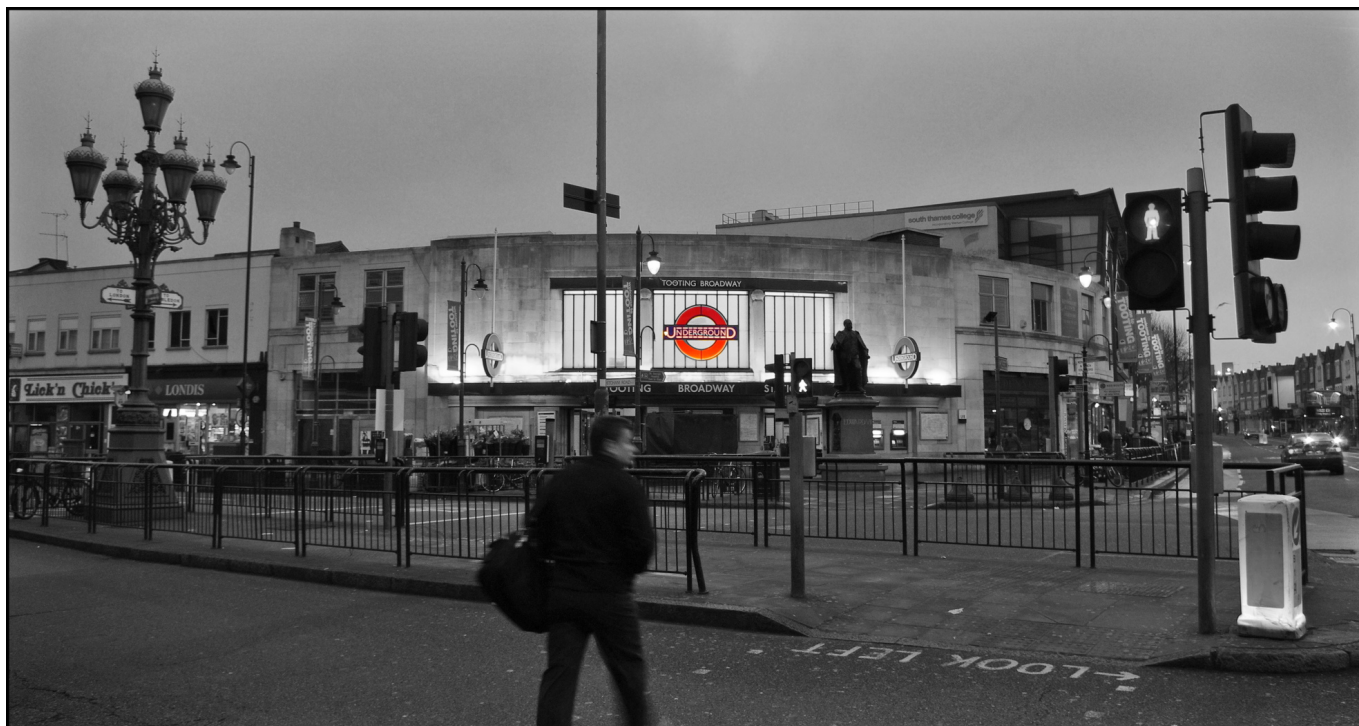


Figure 1.5: TOOTING BROADWAY



## Tooting Broadway

### Led by a lion

Thought for the day 22nd December 2015

“

An army of sheep led by a lion can  
defeat an army of lions led by a sheep.

*Proverb*

”

No matter we are Buddhist, Christian or atheist, we all have a single God that we revere, worship, follow blindly.

*'Attachment is our God': (Alan Weller, 2010, p.12)*

We clap at and revere musicians, actors, film directors, comedians for giving us [enjoyment](#). We go to the movies, buy 33 cushions for our house, 6 guitars, the fashionable, fast car. We buy shoes with a trendy brand name. We fall in [love](#). We [love](#) solving problems in physics, maths, and chemistry. We have [expectations](#) of getting to work on time.

*We go wrong due to [attachment](#):*

We [steal](#), [fiddle](#) expenses, have affairs, [sexual misconduct](#), [kill](#), [lie](#), [bully](#). We are [racist](#), [gender biased](#). We [assault](#) tube staff, [verbally](#) or [physically](#).

*[Attachment](#) is a condition for [grief](#):*

The cat jumps in front of the television when Strictly Come Dancing is on. The Tunbridge Wells resident is [devastated](#) when Poundland comes to the city centre. We get [agitated](#) when coffee is poured into a tea mug. We are [annoyed](#) when our train is cancelled.

*[Attachment](#) is the sheep that leads the lions.*

*[Understanding](#) is the lion that leads the sheep.*

### In a nutshell

[Attachment](#) rules our lives.

[Attachment](#) is a condition for [aversion](#).

We go wrong due to [attachment](#).

The [understanding](#) of reality can overcome [attachment](#).

*Further study: Abhidhamma in Daily Life, (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.5)*



Figure 1.6: TOOTING BEC

## Tooting Bec

### Too Busy

Thought for the day  
20th December 2018

“

Nobody is too busy.

*Oval Station*

”

Whether we are busy or not there is always reality. [Seeing](#), [hearing](#), [touching](#), [attachment](#), [aversion](#). We do not have to do anything special to [see](#) or to have [attachment](#) or [aversion](#). They are conditioned to arise whether we [like](#) it or not. In the same way [mindfulness](#) is conditioned to arise there is no one who can ‘[try](#)’ and have it. The condition for [mindfulness](#) is [listening](#) and [considering](#) the teachings about realities. It is not conditioned by the quiet place. Anytime is [mindfulness](#) time. Nobody can be too busy for the development of [understanding](#) reality.

Extract from Vipassanā Letters (Nina van Gorkom, 2000, p.5):

When one is busy with one’s work, when there is [non-forgetfulness](#), one can begin to have some [understanding](#), even though it be very little, of what is real. [Citta \(consciousness\)](#) is real, it experiences an object. A dead body, even if there are still eyes and ears, cannot experience anything. [Citta](#) experiences. The experience is a reality. We should not be [attached](#) to the idea of, ‘how can I have more [sati \(awareness\)](#)’.

### In a nutshell

[Mindfulness](#) can arise anytime in any place.

Nobody can ‘[try](#)’ and have it. It is conditioned to arise.

It is conditioned by the right [understanding](#) of the teachings about realities.

*Further study:* Vipassanā Letters (Nina van Gorkom, 2000, p.5):



Figure 1.7: BALHAM

## Balham

### Kindness

#### Service Announcement

16th September 2015

“My mum works on the tube.  
Last night someone shouted at her again.  
I thought she was crying.  
But she said it was just something in her eye.

TFL

”

During a visit to St Georges hospital, the nurse took my details and said that being a teacher must be a [stressful](#) job. I said that it was not as [stressful](#) as hers. When I make a mistake, somebody loses a few marks when she makes a mistake someone may lose a life. She then replied that this was not the most [stressful](#) part of her job. What she found most [stressful](#) was the [impatience](#) of people waiting for the attention of nurses and doctors. How pitiful is it that nurses who often work 12 hours intensive shifts should be subject to [verbal](#) abuse from [impatient](#) patients. The same situation applies to the tube staff. There is never any reason why they should be abused.

Good mental states are rooted in [detachment](#) e.g [kindness](#), [generosity](#), [compassion](#), [appreciation](#) of someone's good deeds. They are also [calm](#). At the moment of [kindness](#) there is [calmness](#) of [mind](#). For example if we [see](#) a rat do we have [kindness](#) or [aversion](#)? If your house is full of a 1000 rats but you are [kind](#) towards them you will be [calm](#) in that situation.

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of [loving-kindness](#), [mettā](#), as follows (Nina van Gorkom, 2007, chap.9):

“[Loving-kindness](#) has the characteristic of promoting the welfare (of living beings); its function is to provide for their welfare, or its function is to remove [resentment](#); its manifestation is [kindliness](#); seeing the agreeable side of beings is its proximate cause.”

### In a nutshell

There is NEVER any reason to [abuse](#) nurses or tube staff.

[Kindness](#) is rooted in [detachment](#).

Direct [understanding](#) of reality is rooted in [detachment](#).

Wholesome qualities are an aid to the development of [understanding](#) reality.

*Further study:* The Perfections Leading to Enlightenment (Nina van Gorkom, 2007, chap.9)





Figure 1.8: CLAPHAM SOUTH

# Clapham South

## Falling in Love

Thought for the day  
2nd September 2015

“You know that tingly feeling that you get when you see someone you like? That’s just common sense leaving your body.”  
Anon

“Be aware of the danger of having stronger [attachment](#). It’s vary hard to get rid of; always [wanting](#) to experience it. One is already [attached](#), one is [attached](#) to oneself, to one’s body and one [wants](#) to possess the other being as well — too much strong [attachment](#). It’s all for [enjoying](#) one’s [feeling](#). [Feeling](#) likes to feel that way very often.

One wants to [see](#) more, to [hear](#) more, to [touch](#) more. [Attachment](#) lures everyone. Just one word, ‘[love](#)’, and we can see its nature is only [attachment](#) and in the absolute sense it’s attachment to one’s own pleasant [feeling](#). One [clings](#) to one’s pleasant [feeling](#) by experiencing such an object — that being, that person or what one takes for a person. [Feeling](#) likes to [feel](#) that way. It’s just [feeling](#), not one’s own. It’s a conditioned reality, so it’s not permanent, the kind that [attachment](#) is [attached](#) to.” (Sarah Procter Abbott, 1979, p.1)

From the preface to The Buddhist Teaching on Physical Phenomena (Nina van Gorkom, 2009, p.iii):

That which is made of iron, wood or hemp is not a strong [bond](#), say the wise; (but) that [longing](#) for jewels, ornaments, children and wives is far greater an [attachment](#).  
*Dhammapada* (vs. 345)

## In a nutshell

Falling in love is [attachment](#) to pleasant [feeling](#).  
[Feelings](#) are not permanent. They are conditioned to arise and fall away very quickly.  
[Attachment](#) to [feeling](#) is like a trap or bait. It lures us to suffering, because pleasant [feelings](#) are impermanent.

*Further study:* Buddhism in Daily Life (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.10).  
Love and Attachment (Sarah Procter Abbott, 1979, p.1).



Figure 1.9: CLAPHAM COMMON



# Clapham Common

## Integrity

Thought for the day

19th September 2018

“I respect those who tell the truth  
no matter how hard it is.  
Integrity is everything.  
*Oval Station*

”

“Only a coward lies because he’s afraid of inconvenience, afraid of trouble, afraid of poverty, therefore, he’s capable of and [shamelessly](#) lies.” Derived from Phrases on Buddhism (Alan Weller, 2010, p.12)

The Truth is not necessarily what we [want](#) or [like](#).

Truth can be against the stream of common [thought](#).

From The Perfections Leading to Enlightenment, chapter 7: (Nina van Gorkom, 2007, chap.7)

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of truthfulness as follows:

“Truthfulness has the characteristic of non-deceptiveness in speech; its function is to verify in accordance with fact; its manifestation is excellence; honesty is its proximate cause.”

The perfection of truthfulness, *sacca pāramī*, is sincerity and truthfulness with regard to realities. It means truthfulness through body, [speech](#) and [mind](#). In order to realize the four Noble Truths, one should be truthful, sincere, with regard to oneself, and this means, truthful with regard to the realities which appear just as they are. Kusala is kusala and akusala is akusala; they cannot be otherwise, no matter whether they arise in oneself or in someone else.

## In a nutshell

We need to be truthful with the present moment.

We should study the teachings in order to [understand](#) reality as it is.

We should not study it with the idea of gaining something or acquiring honour or praise.

*Further study:* (Nina van Gorkom, 2007, chap.7)



Figure 1.10: CLAPHAM NORTH

## Clapham North

### True love

Thought for the day  
8th September 2015

“

True love is: difficult to find,  
Easy to lose, hard to forget.

*unknown*

”

...In Safety and in bliss  
May creatures all be of a blissful heart.  
Whatever breathing beings there may be,  
No matter whether they are frail or firm,  
With None excepted, be they long or big  
Or middle-sized, or be they short or small  
Or thick, as well as those seen or unseen,  
Or whether they are dwelling far or near,  
Existing or yet seeking to exist,  
May creatures all be of blissful heart.  
Let no one work another one's undoing  
Or even slight him at all anywhere;  
And never let them wish each other ill  
Through provocation or resentful thought.  
And just as a might a mother with her life  
Protect the son that was her only child,  
So let him then for every living thing  
Maintain unbounded consciousness in being  
Above, below, and all around in between,  
Untroubled, with no enemy or foe...  
*Karaniya Metta-sutta (Sutta Nipata, vs 143–152)*  
(cited by Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.6).

### In a nutshell

True [love](#) does select who to [love](#). True [love](#) is accompanied by [calm](#). Is conditioned. Cannot be kept. *Further study*: Abhidhamma in Daily Life (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.6).



Figure 1.11: STOCKWELL

## Stockwell

### A positive attitude

Thought for the day

6th August 2018

“A positive attitude gives you power over your circumstances instead of circumstances having power over you.”  
*Oval Station*

Sometimes we [think](#) positive [thoughts](#), sometimes we [think](#) negative [thoughts](#). However, mostly we are occupied with the object of our [thinking](#) and not the nature of the reality which [thinks](#). [Thinking](#) arises by conditions and falls away in an instant, it cannot be controlled, it does not belong to you. If there is no [thinking](#) is there I [think](#)? A positive attitude is to begin to [understand](#) the nature of [thinking](#) as it is, no matter it is positive, negative, good or bad. This [understanding](#) will give us power over our circumstances because mostly we are disturbed by our own [thinking](#). This [understanding](#) is also conditioned. Below is an extract from chapter 3 of The Buddha's Path.

One is used to [thinking](#) of a self who coordinates all the different experiences through the [senses](#) and the [mind](#), a self who can [see](#), [hear](#) and [think](#) all at the same time, but in reality there can be only one moment of consciousness at a time which experiences one object. At one moment life is [seeing](#), at another moment life is [hearing](#) and at another moment again life is [thinking](#). Each moment of our life arises because of its own conditions, exists for an extremely short time and then falls away. [Seeing](#) arises dependant on [eye-sense](#), on [colour](#) and on other factors. It exists just for a moment and then it is gone.

### In a nutshell

[Thinking](#) cannot be controlled, it is conditioned to arise.

A positive attitude is to understand the nature of [thinking](#).

When the nature of [thinking](#) is [understood](#) clearer, we will be less disturbed by our circumstances.

*Further reading:* The Buddha's Path, chapter 3 (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.3).





Figure 1.12: OVAL

## Oval

### Wrongs things

Thought for the day

18th September 2018

“When you stop the wrong things. You give the right things a chance to catch you.”  
*Oval Station*

Life is at this moment and whatever we are interested in now we get a tendency for in the future. If we are [unkind](#) now then we are more likely to be [unkind](#) in the future. Abstaining from [killing](#), [lying](#), [sexual misconduct](#) is [kind](#) and so is a condition for more [kindness](#) in the future.

From Abhidhamma in Daily Life, chapter 4 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.4)

Why are people so different from one another? The reason is that they accumulate different inclinations. When a child has been taught from his youth to be [generous](#) he accumulates [generosity](#). People who are [angry](#) very often, accumulate a great deal of [anger](#). We all have accumulated different inclinations, tastes and skills.

Each [citta](#) ([consciousness](#)) which arises falls away completely and is succeeded by the next [citta](#). How then can there be accumulation of good and bad inclinations? Why are people so different from one another? The reason is that they accumulate different inclinations. When a child has been taught from his youth to be [generous](#) he accumulates [generosity](#). People who are [angry](#) very often accumulate a great deal of [anger](#). We all have accumulated different inclinations, tastes and skills.

### In a nutshell

We accumulate good and bad qualities each moment of life.

By giving up bad [thoughts](#) and [actions](#), good [thoughts](#) and [actions](#) will grow.

Further reading: The Buddha's Path chapter 7 (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.7)





# 2

Change at Kennington for Charing Cross Branch  
and Battersea Branch



Figure 2.1: KENNINGTON

## Kennington

### Overlooking the obvious

Thought for the day

16th December 2015

“NASA spent millions of dollars inventing the ball-point pen, so they could write in space.  
The Russians took a pencil.  
*Will Chabot*”

This is a matter of overlooking the obvious? Why spend millions of dollars on a pen when you can just use a pencil? Health and Safety, that is why! Pencils are inflammable, also you do not want bits of pencil lead floating around in your capsule (Curtin, 2019).

Is there any other way that NASA overlooks the obvious?

Yes, using the wrong units, English instead of metric and sending a \$125 million Mars orbiter into the wrong orbit (CNN, 2019).

Yes, forgetting the SD card in the Go Pro camera while photographing the walkabout in space (Dean, 2019).

Yes, not understanding [touching](#) or what is [touched](#). And this is also a Health and Safety issue.

### In a nutshell

Science overlooks the [direct understanding](#) of [touching](#) and the [touched](#).

Overlooking the [direct understanding](#) of [touching](#) and the [touched](#) is unsafe.

*Further study:* BATTERSEA POWER STATION, Also Chapter 3, ‘The Buddha’s Path’ (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.3). Chapter 16, ‘Buddhism in Daily Life’ (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.16). Page 141, ‘Letters on Vipassanā’ (Nina van Gorkom, 2000b, p.141).



Figure 2.2: ELEPHANT & CASTLE

# Elephant & Castle

## Destiny is in ourselves

Thought for the day

29th January 2018

“It is not in the stars to hold  
our destiny but in ourselves.  
*William Shakespeare*”

You do not have to go anywhere to find reality. [Hardness touched](#) is the same type of reality on the tube, on Mars or when skydiving. It arises now and can be understood now. Also the tube is considerably cheaper at £3.90 (Zone 4, peak) as opposed to \$1.3 trillion dollars to go to Mars! From Abhidhamma in Daily Life, page 23 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, p.23):

In the Gradual Sayings (Book of the Fours, chapter V, paragraph 5, Rohitassa) we read that Rohitassa, a deva, asked the Buddha about reaching the world's end. He said to the Buddha:

“Pray, lord, is it possible for us, by going, to know, to see, to reach world's end, where there is no more being born or growing old, no more dying, no more falling (from one existence) and rising up (in another)?”

“Your reverence, where there is no more being born or growing old, no more dying, no more falling from one existence and rising up in another, I declare that end of the world is not by going to be known, seen or reached.”

Not to be reached by going is world's end.  
Yet there is no release for man from ill  
Unless he reach the world's end. Then let a man  
Become world-knower, wise, world-ender,  
Let him be one who lives the holy life (15).  
Knowing the world's end by becoming calmed  
He longs not for this world or another.”

## In a nutshell

The world consists of realities.  
Realities are here and now.  
This world can be understood now.

*Further study:* Abhidhamma in Daily Life, p 23 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, p.23).





Figure 2.3: BOROUGH

## Borough

### Why were you born?

Thought for the day  
Wed 11th November 2015

“The two most important days of your life  
are the day that you were born and the  
day that you find out why?

”

Mark Twain

There are an estimated 100 trillion ants in the world (Moore, 2014) and an estimated 20 billion billion animals (Anon 2019, How Many Animals). It is therefore extremely rare to be born as a human being. What separates us from the animals and insects is our ability to reflect on and understand life. Your birth as a human then is more important than anything else when it is used to [understand](#) life. The opportunity to develop the direct [understanding](#) of reality is also very rare.

Life is this moment. In the absolute sense we are born and die each moment. There is the birth and death of [seeing](#) now, [sound](#) now, [attachment](#) or [aversion](#) now. By [understanding](#) the reality of the present moment, we can understand the reason for the birth of reality, our birth. Extract from chapter 10, Buddhism in Daily Life.

How did life start? Is there a beginning to our countless existences? We cannot go back to the past. If we want to know what conditioned our life in the past we should know what it is that conditions our life at the present time. Is there [ignorance](#) now, when we [see](#), [hear](#), [smell](#), [taste](#), [touch](#) or [think](#)? Is there [clinging](#) now to [nāma](#) (mental phenomena) and [rūpa](#) (physical phenomena)? So long as we [cling](#) to [visible objects](#), [sounds](#), [smells](#), [flavours](#), to things [touched](#) and to objects experienced through the [mind-door](#), there are conditions for life to go on. Life is conditioned by [ignorance](#) and [craving](#). (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.10)

### In a nutshell

It is very rare to be born a human being.

It is very rare to have the opportunity to develop the direct [understanding](#) of reality.

To [understand](#) life is most important.

*Further study:* Chapter 10, Buddhism in Daily Life. (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.10)



Figure 2.4: LONDON BRIDGE



## London Bridge

### Every day a new chapter

Thought for the day

19th December 2018

“Don’t allow yourself to wake up with yesterday’s issues troubling your mind. Refuse to live backwards, see every day as a new chapter.”  
*Oval Station*

When we wake up from a dream, all that we have experienced in that dream has gone, nothing remains. In the same way, when we wake up each morning, nothing remains of yesterday, only the [thinking](#) and memory of it. Yet, we are often disturbed by our [thinking](#) of the past or the [thinking](#) of the future which has not come yet. [Thinking](#) is always moving us away from the present reality. Nobody can control [thinking](#), it is a conditioned reality but by [understanding](#) the importance of the present moment there will be fewer conditions to be occupied with the past or future. From Introduction to the Buddhist Scriptures (Gorkom, 2019, p.69)

We read in the “Middle Length Sayings” (III, no. 131, Discourse on the Auspicious) that the Buddha, while he was dwelling near Sāvattthī in the Jeta Grove, said to the monks:

The past should not be followed after, the future not desired.  
What is past is got rid of and the future has not come.  
But whoever has vision now here, now there, of a present dhamma,  
Knowing that it is immovable, unshakable, let him cultivate it.  
Swelter at the task this very day. Who knows whether he will die tomorrow?  
There is no bargaining with the great hosts of Death.  
Thus abiding ardently, unwearied, day and night,  
He indeed is “Auspicious” called, described as a sage at peace.

### In a nutshell

[Thinking](#) moves us away from the present moment.

The more we [understand](#) the value of [understanding](#) the present moment, the less we will be occupied by the past or future.

*Further study:* Introduction to the Buddhist Scriptures p69, (Gorkom, 2019, p.69)



Figure 2.5: BANK

## Bank

### Missed opportunity

Thought for the day

6th October 2016

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

Thomas Edison

The below quote is review of the book ‘Abhidhamma in Daily Life’<sup>1</sup>.

“After 6 years I have quite some Buddhist jargon, but this is going too far. It’s all very interesting and wise, but totally inaccessible; I could not get through.” *Goodreads (accessed July 2016)*

This is very understandable and I am sure all of us who have read this book have been in the same situation. However, it is key to understanding the deep message of the Buddha’s teaching, it is an opportunity that should not be missed.

I have responded to this quote in a video here: (Why ‘Abhidhamma in Daily Life?’, 2018)

### In a nutshell

The Abhidhamma ‘higher reality’ is difficult and looks like work.

It is essential to [understand](#) the core of it in order to develop the [understanding](#) of realities.

*Further study:* Abhidhamma in Daily Life (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a). Press release ADL (Weller, 2019). Why Abhidhamma in Daily Life (Why ‘Abhidhamma in Daily Life?’, 2018).

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<sup>1</sup>An exposition of all realities in detail. The prefix “abhi” is used in the sense of “preponderance” or “distinction”. “Abhidhamma” means “higher dhamma” or “dhamma in detail”. (Nina van Gorkom 2010a, preface.)

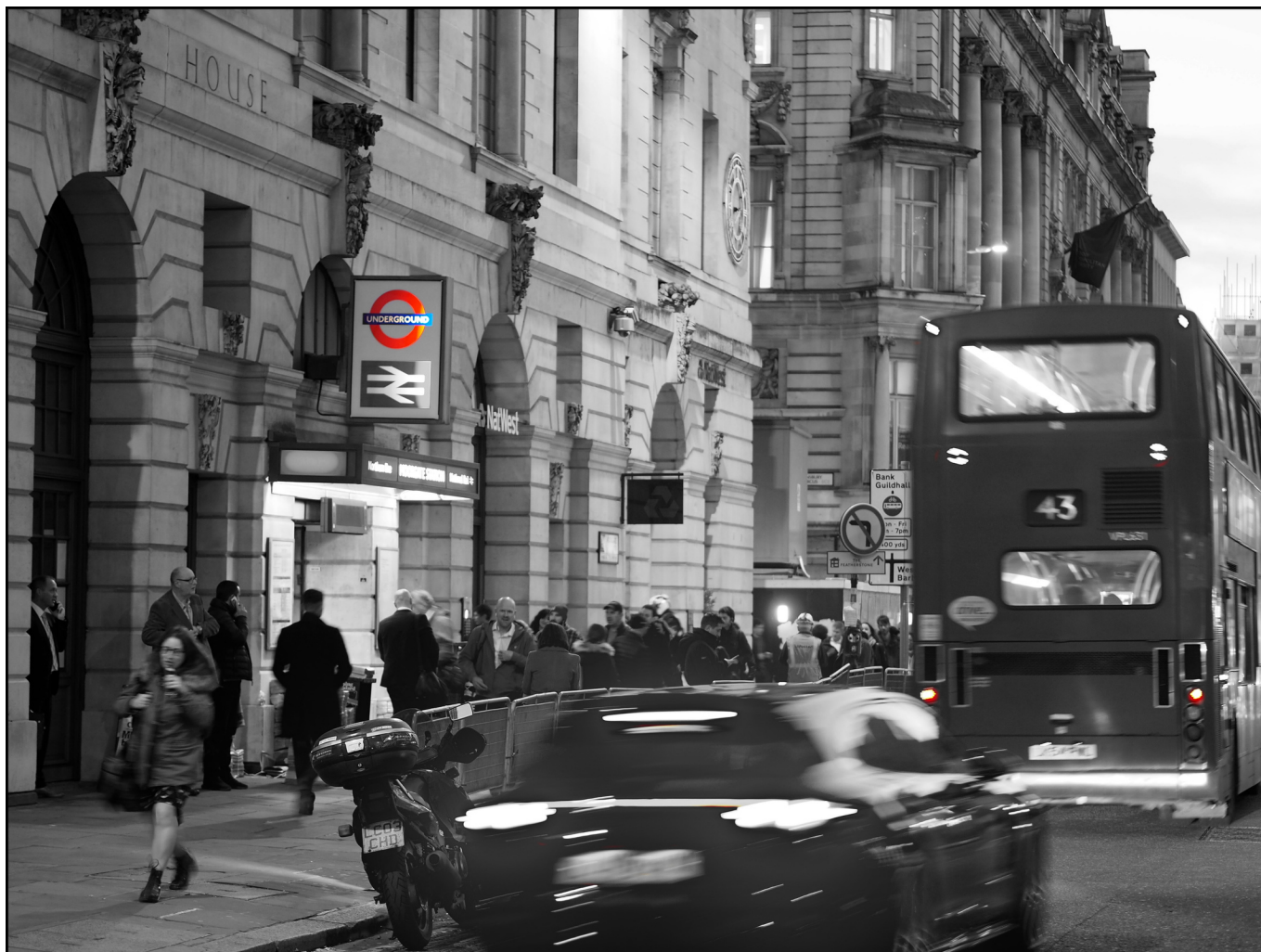


Figure 2.6: MOORGATE

# Moorgate

## Risk

Thought for the day

September 22nd 2015

“Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.”  
*Proverb*

What are the risks?

The right understanding of the teachings will not harm you or cause you to harm others. However, there are risks. In order of severity:

- *Death*. There is a story in the Pāli Canon (from memory) about a 16-year-old girl who had great respect for the Buddha. He was due to pass through the village, but her parents forbade her to pay respect to him. When he entered the village, she disobeyed her parents, paid respect to the Buddha and was subsequently beaten to death. The risk: very low.
- *Suicide*. Some young people commit suicide when they are unable to deal with leaving a very close (religious) community. The risk: very low
- *Insanity, depression, anxiety, stress*. According to WHO (World Health Organisation) (WHO, 2019), 1 in 4 of us will have mental health problems at some point and so delving deep inside our own minds can release a can of worms. Many people may consider you are mad, so you have to be able to cope with this [stress](#). The teachings are ‘against the stream of common thought’. Risk: medium
- *Dizziness, headaches through hyperventilation*. Meditation on breath is often practised wrongly and can lead to these symptoms. This subject was taught to experienced Monks. If you saw Dr Brian Cox giving a physics lecture to third-year undergraduates give it a miss it would be far to difficult for the layperson. Risk: low
- *Wrong understanding* of the teachings leading to some of the above. The right [understanding](#) of the teachings is rare. Even if you encounter the correct teaching it’s very easy to be misled by others. The risk: very high.

## In a nutshell

There are risks in developing [understanding](#).

There are risks in not developing [understanding](#) (see EUSTON)





Figure 2.7: OLD STREET

## Old Street

**Thought for the day**

*13th October*

“The only way to succeed is not to worry about what anyone else is doing.”  
*Anon*

A few years back I had to photograph 3 uncut diamonds worth about \$6,000,000. Does it surprise you that I do not scour the cities and countryside in search of such diamonds? Of course not, you understand their rarity. In the same way, the right [understanding](#) of the teachings about realities is extremely rare and nobody around you would have found that [understanding](#). Nobody around you has a clue about them.

Therefore, you need to ignore any voice, either your own, or others which says do not [understand](#) reality.

### In a nutshell

The right [understanding](#) of the teachings is very rare.

Those around you will not [understand](#) the importance of these teachings.

The teachings are against the ‘stream of common [thought](#)’.

You need to be wary of being a victim of others [ignorance](#).

*Further study:* see the Introduction

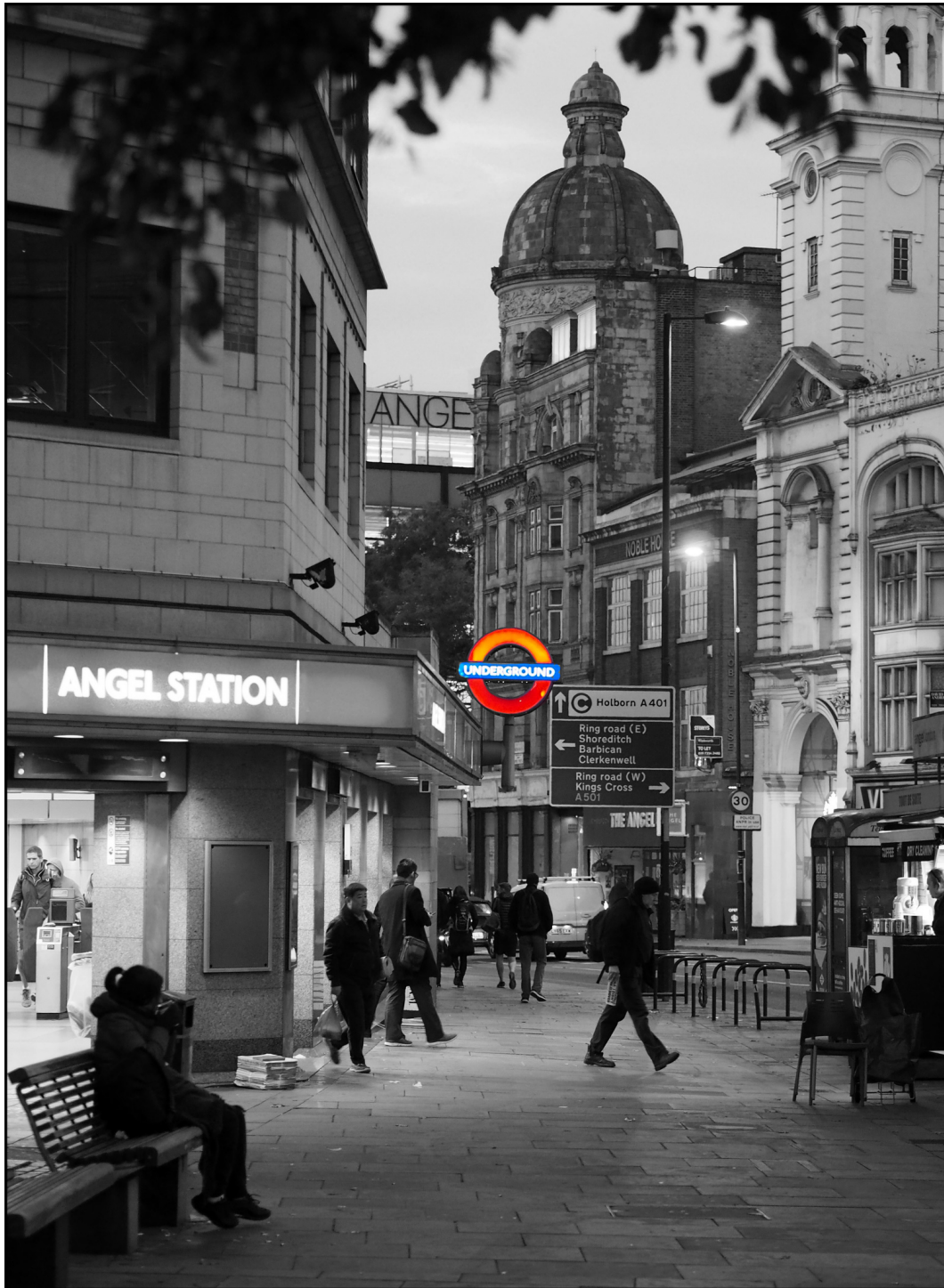


Figure 2.8: ANGEL



# Angel

## The training

Thought for the day

27th sept 2015

“It’s all to do with training:  
you can do a lot if you’re properly trained.”  
*Queen Elizabeth 11*

Training on *higher reality* brings about *higher learning* which brings about a *higher result*, namely the destruction of [attachment](#) to the idea self.

This, monks, is the sole way that leads to the purification of beings, to the utter passing beyond [sorrow](#) and [grief](#), to the destruction of [woe](#) and [lamentation](#), to the winning of the Method, to realizing [Nibbāna](#), to wit: the four applications of [mindfulness](#). (cited by Gorkom, 2019, chap.6)

## In a nutshell

Higher reality → higher training → higher learning → lower attachment to self → lower [lamentation](#).

*Further study:* Introduction to the Buddhist Scriptures (Gorkom, 2019, chap.6)



Figure 2.9: KINGS CROSS ST PANCRAS

## Kings Cross St Pancras

### Be yourself

Thought for the day

9th December 2015

“Be yourself, everyone else is already taken.

Oscar Wilde

”

We all have different interests, different lives. We [watch](#) particular programs on TV, Strictly Come Dancing or the Bourne Identity (again). We [like](#) a certain type of shoe, or guitar or cookie. This is our natural life which can be [understood](#). We should not try and be different from what we actually are. The path to enlightenment is the path to [understanding](#) the present moment whatever that is. It is purely [understanding](#), we do not need to do anything different from our natural life. This [understanding](#) needs to be able to [understand](#) our natural inclinations and interests. It needs to [understand](#) ‘the world’. We should not try and be somebody we are not.

This moment of [seeing](#) is natural, we do not have to do anything in order to see. [Seeing](#), [hearing](#), [touching](#), [tasting](#), [thinking](#), [feeling](#) are realities which are conditioned to arise whether we [like](#) it or not. From Survey of Paramattha Dhammas, chapter 23 (Sujin Boriharnwanaket, 2006, chap.23).

In Kindred Sayings (IV, Saḷāyatana-vagga, Second Fifty, Chapter IV, § 84, Transitory). We read that Ānanda asked the Buddha what the world is:

“The world! The world!” is the saying, lord. Pray, how far, lord, does this saying go?

What is transitory by nature, Ānanda, is called “the world” in the Ariyan discipline. And what, Ānanda, is transitory by nature? The [eye](#), Ānanda, is transitory by nature, [objects](#), [tongue](#), [mind](#) is transitory by nature, [mind-states](#), [mind-consciousness](#), [mind-contact](#), whatsoever pleasant [feeling](#) or unpleasant [feeling](#) or indifferent [feeling](#) arises owing to [mind-contact](#), that also is transitory by nature. What is thus transitory, Ānanda, is called “the world” in the Ariyan discipline.

### In a nutshell

It is important to [understand](#) our natural interests in daily life.

Many different types of realities need to be [understood](#) in order to bring about [detachment](#) from the idea of self.

*Further study:* Survey of Paramattha Dhammas, chapter 23 (Sujin Boriharnwanaket, 2006, chap.23).

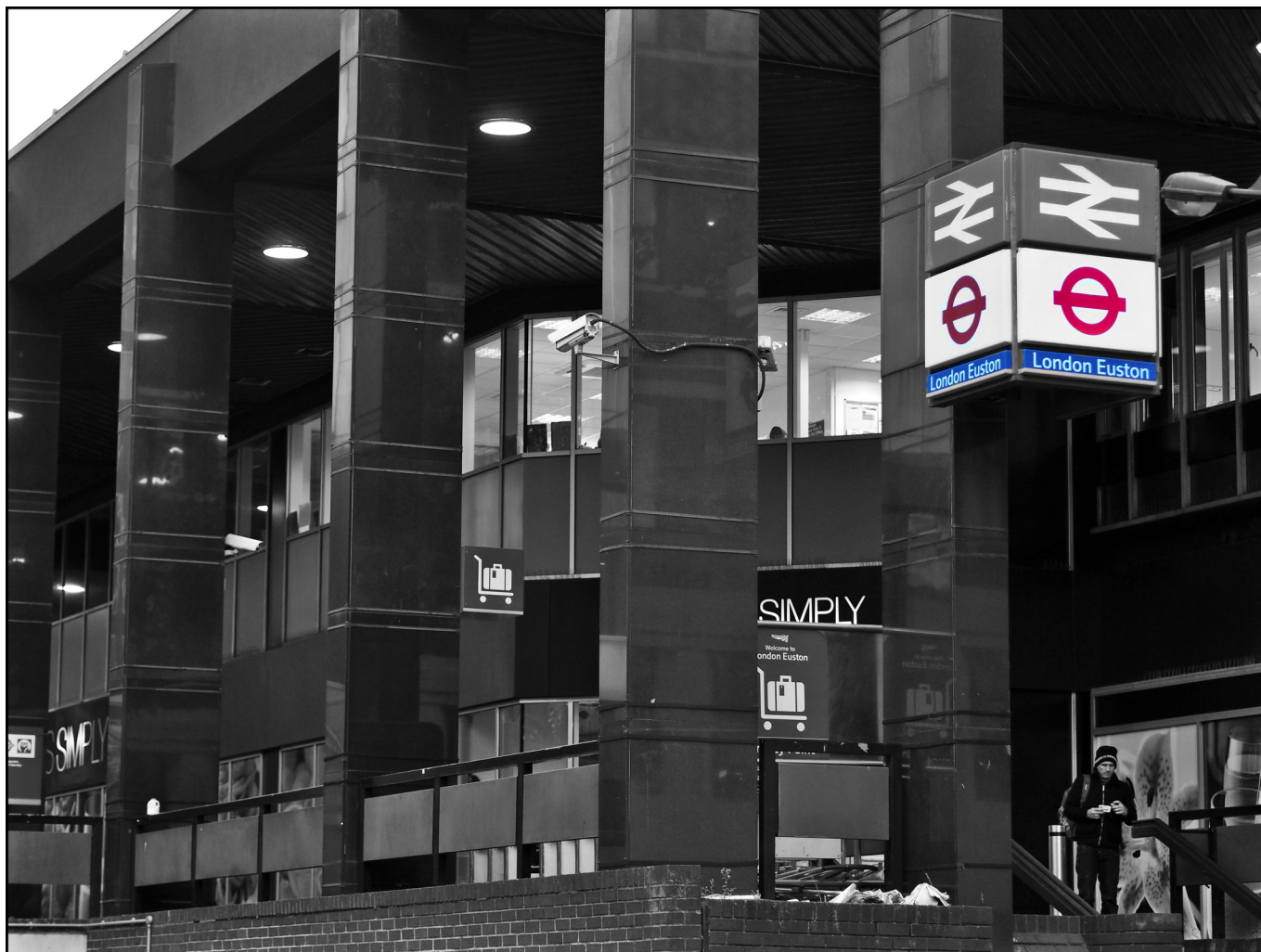


Figure 2.10: EUSTON

## Euston

### Taking a risk

Thought for the day  
Wed 23rd September 2015

“To Decline on taking a risk is a risk in itself.  
*Proverb*”

Consider the below list:

Husband dead 21/10, elder son dead 5/3, best friend 1 dead 20/5, best friend 2 dead 3/6, friends 3–10 dead. Friend 11 dying of lung cancer 11/10, friend 12 in hospital 6/1, friend 13 in a special hospital undergoing physiotherapy 14/9.

This list is not a list of a Syrian refugee or the victim of some USA shooting. It is my mother's birthday list (age 97). Now dead! This is where we are all going. Life is fragile, less attachment, less sorrow.

The hours pass by. Nights drive us ever on.  
Stages of life in turn abandon us:  
Whoso doth contemplate this [fear](#) of death,  
Let him reject the [bait](#) of all the worlds,  
Let him aspire after final [peace](#).  
*The Buddha, Kindred Sayings 1, Ch 1, para 4*

### In a nutshell

Life is risky.  
You are in the 'mouth of death' and may die at any time.  
It is urgent to develop [understanding](#).

*Further study:* Buddhism in Daily, chapter 9 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.9).





Figure 2.11: MORNINGTON CRESCENT

## Mornington Crescent

### Strong enough

Thought for the day

20th September, 2018

“You are strong enough to face it all even if it does not feel like it right now  
*Oval Station*

”

“More [ignorance](#), more wrong understanding, more [attachment](#) and this will mean more [unhappiness](#), so matter how difficult we find it what choice do we have. We either go forward or we go with the rest of the world backwards and down. Even if we go forward only a little bit it’s much better than going backwards. If we [understand](#) how important it is to go forward if we see the value of progress and the dangers of falling backwards then perhaps there will be more conditions for us to study, to [listen](#), to develop [kusula](#) (wholesomeness) and to see progress taking place.”

*Alan Driver from Phrases on Buddhism (Alan Weller, 2010)*

### In a nutshell

We may find it very difficult to go forwards.

We will always face difficulties if we go backwards.

There is no choice but to go forwards if we want to have fewer difficulties.

*Further study:* The Perfections Leading to Enlightenment, chapter 6 (Nina van Gorkom, 2007a, chap.6).





3

Change at Camden Town for Edgware Branch



Figure 3.1: CAMDEN TOWN

## Camden Town

### Good reason

Thought for the day

6/10/18

“Have a very good reason for everything you do.

*Laurence Olivier*

”

‘We’ are told to concentrate on breathing. Why does this work? We are told to walk slowly. Why? We are told to observe the rise and fall of the abdomen. Why?

There are two ways of mental development. [Mindfulness](#) (Satipaṭṭhāna) and the development of [calm](#) (Samatha). The latter is what is usually referred to as sitting meditation. It leads to the temporary suppression of [attachment](#). It is not necessary for the development of [mindfulness](#). ‘We’ do not need to do anything for the development of [mindfulness](#) other than [listen](#) to and consider the teachings. Just [understand](#) each word, such as reality, dhamma, anattā, [visible](#) object, [seeing](#).

### In a nutshell

There is a lot of vague ‘psychobabble’ surrounding meditation and mindfulness.

It is not a matter of ‘you doing’ anything but just [understanding](#) the teachings until that can condition right [awareness](#).

Further study: The Buddha’s Path, chapter 7 (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.7)



Figure 3.2: KENTISH TOWN

## Kentish Town

### Growth and opportunity

Thought for the day  
Saturday 1st December 2012

“Trust that every situation has the seeds for growth and opportunity.  
*unknown*”

Only if you plant the right seed! The right seed is [understanding](#) of the bits in blue, the reality of the present moment. [Understanding](#) ‘the all’. From Buddhism in Daily Life, chapter 18 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.18)

We read in the Kindred Sayings (IV, Salayatana-vagga, Kindred Sayings on Sense, First Fifty, Ch III, par 26, Comprehension) that the Buddha said:

Without fully [knowing](#), without [comprehending](#) the all, monks, without [detaching](#) himself from, without abandoning the all, a man is incapable of extinguishing dukkha.

Without fully [knowing](#), without [comprehending](#), without [detaching](#) himself from, without abandoning what (all) is a man incapable of extinguishing dukkha?

It is by not fully knowing the [eye](#)...[objects](#)...[eye-consciousness](#)...[eye-contact](#)...that pleasant or unpleasant or indifferent [feeling](#)...the [tongue](#)...[savours](#)...the [body](#)...[touches](#)...the [mind](#)...[mind-objects](#)...that a man is incapable of extinguishing dukkha. This is the all, monks, without fully [knowing](#) which...a man is so incapable.

But by fully [knowing](#), by [comprehending](#), by [detaching](#) himself from, by abandoning the all, one is capable of extinguishing dukkha.

### In a nutshell

We can progress at any moment with the right [understanding](#) of the difference between reality and concept.

*Further study:* Buddhism in Daily Life, chapter 18 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.18).



Figure 3.3: TUFNELL PARK

# Tufnell Park

## The present

Thought for the day  
Wed 2nd December 2015

“Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That’s why its called the present.”  
*unknown*

Extract from Phrases on Buddhism (Alan Weller, 2010):

- What is experienced is [hardness](#), not a table, but it has to be known by developed [understanding](#).
- Can you tell what is beyond this moment?
- The test is at this moment. Test now... [Visual object](#) now is the test of whether one has [understanding](#) or whether there should be more understanding developed.
- [Hearing](#) this moment is not hearing a moment ago.
- There must be right [understanding](#), precisely, of this moment. One cannot afford to be [disinterested](#) in reality.
- From the beginning it must be Right [Understanding](#). But the only moment that we can progress, the one and only moment in our whole life... is this moment.
- There is never a moment goes by when [awareness](#) cannot arise.
- The way to develop more [understanding](#) is exactly the same for every living being that was ever born. To be [aware](#) of the reality which appears now in your life whatever that reality may be.
- All moments are moments for [awareness](#).
- We cannot call back any reality. Nobody can condition any reality. It is conditioned, it is unavoidable, uncontrollable.
- The present moment is the most important moment.

## In a nutshell

The present moment is the most important moment.

*Further study:* The most important moment (The most important moment, 2017).





Figure 3.4: ARCHWAY

## Archway

### The winds of change

Thought for the day

24th November 2015

“When the winds of change blow. Some people build walls, others build windmills.”  
*Chinese Proverb*

How do we build walls? By being [attached](#) to the present reality, by being drawn into the present reality. How do we build a windmill? By being [detached](#) from the present reality, by not being drawn into by the present reality. How do we build a better windmill? By being [detached](#) from the present reality with [understanding](#). From ‘Introduction to the Buddhist Scriptures’ (Gorkom, 2019, chap.5).

...If, your reverences, there are at this present time both [eye-sense](#) and [visibile object](#)... [ear](#) and [sounds](#)... [nose](#) and [smells](#)... [tongue](#) and [flavours](#)... [body](#) and [tactile objects](#)... [mind](#) and [mental objects](#) to which his [consciousness](#) is not bound fast by [desire](#) and [attachment](#) at this same present time, (then) because his [consciousness](#) is not bound fast by [desire](#) and [attachment](#), he does not [delight](#) in them; not [delighting](#) in them, he is not drawn away among present dhammas. It is thus, your reverences, that one is not drawn into present dhammas.

### In a nutshell

We are not ‘going with the flow’ by being attached to the present moment.

*Further study:* ‘Introduction to the Buddhist Scriptures’ (Gorkom, 2019, chap.5).



Figure 3.5: HIGHGATE

## Highgate

### Pay the price

Thought for the day  
Friday 11th september 2015

“Pay the price to obtain the prize.  
*Proverb*

”

STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) are difficult subjects both at school and university. However the rewards of studying them can be very high. Banks and technology companies pay high salaries (as much as £80,000 per annum pro-rata) to the best young STEM undergraduates during summer holidays. The price these STEM students have paid for these high rewards are patient hard work over a long period of time. Learning a small amount each day from excellent teachers.

Similarly, the development of direct [understanding](#) of reality has a high prize. A higher prize than a high salary. The lessening of [attachment](#) to the idea of self. There is also a price which has to be paid. The [patience](#) to learn a tiny amount each day or week over a long period of time. The [listening](#) to and careful [consideration](#) of the teachings from good friends.

Extract from Vipassanā Letters (Nina van Gorkom, 2000a, chap.1):

The gradual development of [understanding](#) is in the scriptures (Gradual Sayings, Book of the Sevens, Ch VII, § 7) compared to the wearing out of a knife handle which one holds each day. However, it wears out so slowly that one cannot see it's wearing away. Chapter 1 Vipassanā Letters

### In a nutshell

There can be a high prize for studying difficult subjects.

[Detachment](#) from the idea of self is worth more than a high salary.

*Further study:* Vipassanā Letters (Nina van Gorkom, 2000a, chap.1).





Figure 3.6: EAST FINCHLEY

## East Finchley

### It is all within yourself

Thought for the day

19th June 2018

“Very little is needed to make a happy life; it is all within yourself, in your way of thinking.”  
*Marcus Aurelius*

We can make a happier life for animals by [abstaining](#) from shooting them with arrows! Can you [see](#) the archer? See Figure 3.7 overleaf.

Our [thinking](#) is like a second arrow for the unpleasant experiences in our life. We [see](#) or [hear](#) the unpleasant [object](#) and then make it worse by [thinking](#) about it again and again.

We can also live a happier life if we understand that [happiness](#) is a type of suffering. [Happiness](#) has its own intrinsic nature of being [happy](#), but it is conditioned to arise and it falls away very quickly. We cannot have it at will, it cannot be controlled. One moment of [happiness](#) is never enough, we are constantly looking for things to make us [happy](#). We are chasing after pleasant things all day long. We are never satisfied. This constant search for [happiness](#) is a type of suffering. To be free from enslavement to the objects in and around is the happiness of [peace](#). Extract from Cetasikas (Nina van Gorkom, 2010c, chap.16)

The Buddha reminded people of the futility of sense-pleasures. We read in the Dhammapada (verses 146-149):

What is laughter, what is [joy](#), when the world is ever burning?  
Shrouded by darkness, do you not seek a light?  
Behold this beautiful body, a mass of sores, a heaped-up (lump),  
diseased, much thought of, in which  
nothing lasts, nothing persists.  
Thoroughly worn out is this body,  
a nest of diseases, perishable;  
This putrid mass breaks up; truly life ends in death.

### In a nutshell

[Unhappiness](#) is mostly caused by our own thinking.

[Happiness](#) is a type of suffering because it is never satiated.

*Further study:* Cetasikas (Nina van Gorkom, 2010c, chap.16).





Figure 3.7: The Archer at EAST FINCHLEY. A 10-foot-tall (3.0 m) statue by Eric Aumonier of a kneeling archer captured as if having just released an arrow. The archer is intended to commemorate Finchley's ancient association with hunting in the nearby Royal Forest of Enfield (Wikipedia.org). See EMBANKMENT

4

Change at Finchley Central for Mill Hill East



Figure 4.1: FINCHLEY CENTRAL

## Finchley Central

### Foolish

Thought for the day  
*unknown*

“Never do something permanently foolish just because you are temporarily upset.”  
*Oval*

This quote brings to mind a tragic story published in the Daily Mail Online, last year:

“Mustang driver who mowed down and killed teenage moped rider for smashing a bottle on his £35,000 pride and joy is jailed for 23 years.” (Burrows, 2018)

He [loved](#) his car, lost his [temper](#) and in a few minutes of madness [killed](#) somebody and has now been sentenced to 23 years in jail. Would this had happened if this had been a Lada Riva instead of a Ford Mustang? I doubt it. [Attachment](#) is a condition for going wrong. If we accumulate [attachment](#) it may be ‘us’ who go wrong someday.

If you are a teacher you could try this lovely idea from Teachers TV, authored by Susie Paskins (What Would the Buddha have Done? 2015). Get your 11-year-old pupils to colour in a picture of a Mandala for half an hour then get the best-behaved pupil to come forward and explain their picture to the rest of the class. Then tell this person to rip it up and put it in the bin! Watch him/her and the whole class burst into tears. After you get the sack you can [reflect](#) that the [attachment](#) to your mortgage and pleasant things conditions your [aversion](#).

### In a nutshell

We go wrong because of [attachment](#).  
It is dangerous to accumulate [attachment](#).

*Further study:* The above episode from Teachers TV on YouTube (What Would the Buddha have Done? 2015). See also, BRENT CROSS.





Figure 4.2: WEST FINCHLEY

## West Finchley

### Your time will come

Thought for the day

13th july 2018

“There is no blueprint to when your time will come. All you can do is prepare yourself for when the moment arrives.”  
*Thoughts, Angel*

From the Buddha's Path, chapter 2 (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.2).

Old age, sickness and death are unavoidable. Separation from [dear](#) people through death is bound to happen. We read in the Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nipāta, III, 8, The Arrow, verses 574-582)

“Unindicated and unknown is the length of life of those subject to death. Life is difficult and brief and bound up with suffering. There is no means by which those who are born will not die. Having reached old age, there is death. This is the natural course for a living being. With ripe fruits, there is the constant danger that they will fall. In the same way, for those born and subject to death, there is always the fear of dying. Just as the pots made by a potter all end by being broken, so death is the breaking up of life.

The young and old, the foolish and the wise, all are stopped short by the power of death, all finally end in death. Of those overcome by death and passing to another world, a father cannot hold back his son, nor relatives a relation. See! While the relatives are [looking](#) on and weeping, one by one each mortal is led away like an ox to the slaughter.

In this manner the world is [afflicted](#) by death and decay. But the wise do not [grieve](#), having realized the nature of the world.”

### In a nutshell

Death can come at any time.

The wise do not [grieve](#).

*Further study:* The Buddha's Path, chapter 2 (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.2).





Figure 4.3: WOODSIDE PARK

## Woodside Park

### Time is like a river

Thought for the day

12th September 2018

“Time is like a river, you cannot touch the same water twice, because the flow that has passed will never pass again. Enjoy every moment of life.”  
*Oval*

From Buddhism in Daily Life chapter 9, (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.9)

How do we experience the world? We experience the world through [seeing](#), [hearing](#), [smelling](#), [tasting](#), receiving impressions through the [bodysense](#) and through the [mind](#). Everything we experience through the doors of the five [senses](#) and through the [mind-door](#) is extremely short, because all phenomena which arise fall away immediately. When we [see](#), there is the world of [visible object](#), but it does not last, it falls away again. When we [hear](#), there is the world of [sound](#), but it is impermanent. Likewise the world of [smell](#), the world of [taste](#), the world of [tangible object](#) and the world of mental objects; none of these worlds lasts. In the Visuddhimagga (VIII, 39) we read about the shortness of the world:

...in the ultimate sense the life-moment of living beings is extremely short, being only as much as the occurrence of a single [conscious](#) moment. Just as a chariot wheel, when it is rolling, rolls (that is, touches the ground) only on one point of (the circumference of) its tyre, and, when it is at rest, rests only on one point, so too, the life of living beings lasts only for a single [conscious](#) moment. When that [consciousness](#) has ceased, the being is said to have ceased...

Life, person, [pleasure](#), [pain](#)-just these alone  
Join in one [conscious](#) moment that flicks by.  
Ceased khandhas of those dead or alive  
Are all alike, gone never to return.  
No (world is) born if ([consciousness](#) is) not  
Produced, when that is present, then it lives;  
When [consciousness](#) dissolves, the world is dead...

### In a nutshell

A reality e.g. [sound](#) arises by conditions and ceases immediately. It only arises once in life.

*Further study:* Buddhism in Daily Life, chapter 9 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010b, chap.9)



Figure 4.4: TOTTENRIDGE AND WHETSTONE

## Totteridge and Whetstone

### Help when you can

Thought for the day  
7th September 2018

“Help when you can. Be there when you can. Encourage when you can. A truly happy life comes from giving more than you take.”  
*Oval Station*

What is the best gift we can give?  
Giving up attachment to the idea of self?  
How? By understanding all realities as not-self (anattā)?

Below is an extract from Phrases on Buddhism (Alan Weller, 2010).

- One does not see the value of the eradication of self because one **clings** to oneself all the time. When there is less the idea of self, one develops more pure kusala (wholesomeness).
- Do we hope for a result for me?
- Better to be a nobody than a somebody. Better to be a good friend rather than a teacher.
- Learn to **give** without strings attached.
- We know from our own lives that we don't always give **help** when help is needed.
- Everybody loses when we don't have **mettā** (kindness).
- If we don't develop **sati** (awareness), we can't keep the precepts. So what could be kinder?
- It's kindness when we develop **Satipaṭṭhāna** (mindfulness), we are being **kind** to ourselves and kind to everybody else. We're doing the whole world a favour. We're removing a little bit of **ignorance** from the world that makes us behave and act the way we do.

### In a nutshell

We will live a happier life if we are less **selfish**.

*Further study:* Non-self, chapter 3, The Buddha's Path (Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.3).





Figure 4.5: HIGH BARNET

## High Barnet

### The difficult road

Thought for the day

24th July 2018

“

Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations.

*Proverb*

”

The path at High Barnet station is a long, fairly steep hill. I once had great difficulty in climbing it. I had a 3 day chemistry enhancement course at a nearby school. I was late and ran for the bus. The next day I could hardly walk as I was so unused to running. The ‘road’ to keep fit can be difficult if you are unfit. However, being fit is a ‘beautiful destination’.

Since then I have undertaken the NHS Couch Potato to 5k running program (NHS, 2018) and have completed the 5k run coming 1st. 1st in my age group of which there was one entry! I came 461th overall! Nevertheless, I injured myself several times during training.

In a similar way, the road to [understand](#) reality needs us to be fit mentally. The more we are unfit, the more difficult it is. The hindrances are groups of defilements which hinder the development of [understanding](#) reality. We read in Cetasikas, chapter 23 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010c, chap.23).

The Hindrances or Nīvaraṇas are another group of defilements. In the Dhammasaṅgaṇi (par1152-1163) the hindrances are classified as sixfold: [Sensuous desire](#) (kāmacchanda), [ill will](#) (vyāpāda), [sloth and torpor](#) (thīna-middha), [restlessness](#) and [regret](#) (uddhacca-kukkucca), [doubt](#) (vicikicchā), [ignorance](#) (avijjā)(138).

The hindrances are obstructions, overwhelming the mind, weakening [insight](#) (139). The hindrances obstruct the development of what is wholesome. When we are [attached](#) to pleasant [sights](#) and [sounds](#), to people or to particular places, there is the hindrance of [sensuous desire](#). At the moment of [attachment](#) we do not realize that it obstructs the arising of [kusala citta](#), but we should know that at such a moment there cannot be [generosity](#) or [loving kindness](#).

### In a nutshell

The road to enlightenment is difficult because of our many faults.

*Further study:* Cetasikas, chapter 23 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010c, chap.23).





5

Mill Hill East branch



Figure 5.1: MILL HILL EAST

## Mill Hill East

### Be the change

Thought for the day  
Friday September 2016

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.

M. Ghandi

”

We all tend to blame others for the woes of the world. The murderer, the thief, the child molester, the religious fanatic. However, they are people just like us. We can do something about our own faults, but we cannot do anything about the faults of others. The above actions are rooted in selfishness. The below extract is from A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas (Sujin Boriharnwanaket, 2006, chap.23)

Then the venerable Ānanda came to see the Exalted One... Seated at one side the venerable Ānanda said to the Exalted One: “ ‘Void is the world! Void is the world!’ is the saying, lord. Pray, Lord, how far does this saying go?”

“Because the world is void of the self, Ānanda, or of what belongs to the self, therefore is it said ‘Void is the world.’ And what, Ānanda, is void of the self or of what belongs to the self?

The [eye](#) is void of the self or of what belongs to the self. [Visible object](#) is void of the self or of what belongs to the self. [Seeing-consciousness](#) is void of the self or of what belongs to the self. [Eye-contact](#) is void of the self or of what belongs to the self. Pleasant [feeling](#), unpleasant [feeling](#) or indifferent [feeling](#) which arises owing to [eye-contact](#) is void of the self or of what belongs to the self.” (The same is said with regard to the other doorways.)

“That is why, Ānanda, it is said ‘Void is the world.’ ”

Voidness cannot be realized so long as there is [ignorance](#) of realities. One should know what voidness is and of what there is voidness. One should know the meaning of voidness of the self and of what belongs to the self, as it really is. The dhammas that can be experienced through the [eyes](#), the [ears](#), the [nose](#), the [tongue](#), the [bodysense](#) and the [mind-door](#) arise and then fall away; they are void of the self and of what belongs to the self.

### In a nutshell

It is very easy to blame other people.

We can do something about our own faults.

*Further study:* A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas (Sujin Boriharnwanaket, 2006, chap.23)



6

Battersea branch





Figure 6.1: NINE ELMS

## Nine Elms

### Be the change

Thought for the day

5th October 2013

“You tried your best son and failed miserably. The lesson is never try.  
*Homer Simpson*”

“When on [wishes](#) so much that one wasn’t lost in the stories and one [wishes](#) so much to have more [understanding](#) of the present moment.

It shows so much the strong [clinging](#) to having certain results to having [understanding](#) now. And the idea of “I” or this person is there that should somehow be able to make [understanding](#) arise.

And this is the real hindrance to the development of [understanding](#) of what appears at this moment because one doesn’t realise it’s strong [clinging](#).

Instead of leading towards the right path, it takes one down the wrong path following [lobha \(clinging\)](#), the master, the idea of “I” who should be able to control life or should be able to [understand](#) better.

The point of studying dhammas is to understand there is no person there, there is no “I” who can make anything arise. No one who can watch or do anything.

So [seeing](#) is conditioned now. [Thinking](#) about “I” or this story or that story is conditioned. [Attachment](#) now is conditioned. [Understanding](#) has to develop very naturally. And it has to [understand](#) that it’s so different from when there is that strong [clinging](#) to [understanding](#) hindering natural development of just what appears at the this moment.”

*Sarah Procter Abbott 2nd May 2021*

### In a nutshell

[Attachment](#) hinders the development of [understanding](#) reality.

learn to see that [attachment](#) moves us away from the [understanding](#) of this moment

*Further study: Natural Development (Sarah Procter Abbott 2nd May 2021)*



Figure 6.2: BATTERSEA POWER STATION

## Battersea Power Station

### Parking spaces

Thought for the day

12th July 2013

“The road to success is dotted with many tempting parking spaces.

*Anonymous*

”

Science is not shy of making words: quarks, leptons, isomer, genome, phenotype. Maths and philosophy are not shy of making words: monomial, googolplex, qualia.

There is no word in the English language for what is [seen](#) (as far as I know).

This is an indicator that the above have no [understanding](#) of what is [seen](#). There is, however, a word for it in the Abhidhamma.

The word sights refers to things seen, such as a mountain, person, table, chair. However, the eye is not sensitive to these objects. It is only sensitive to what is [visible](#). The perception of something is a combination of [seeing](#), [thinking](#) and [memory](#).

Can you [see](#) people and things on the TV? Yes! The mind reads out the shades and colours to form the idea of ‘something’. The process is the same whether you [watch](#) a TV or not. [Seeing](#) is followed immediately by [thinking](#).

The reality that is [seen](#) now is not understood and can never be understood by science, by philosophy, by maths.

The object of understanding in science, philosophy, maths is always an idea, never a reality.

Science, philosophy and maths are tempting parking spaces. Other tempting parking spaces are the movie, the novel, ‘Strictly’.

In order to [understand](#) the reality of whatever is now, you have to [listen](#) to the words which reveal whatever reality is now as it is. In order to do this you have to give up words which do not reveal the reality of now, at least temporarily.

### In a nutshell

On the road to success at [understanding](#) reality there are many tempting parking spaces.

A tempting parking space needs to be [seen](#) as a tempting parking space.

*Further study:* ‘Higher reality’, higher learning? Challenging trainee teacher’s conceptions of the nature of the world and the nature of science. (Weller, A., 2017)



7

Charing Cross Branch to Mornington Crescent





Figure 7.1: WATERLOO

## Waterloo

### You may wish you had started

**Thought for the day**  
*Tuesday 22nd October 2015*

“A year from now you may wish you had started today.

*Karen Lamb*”

A year from now you maybe sick, dead or distracted.

Extract from Cetasikas, chapter 10. (Nina van Gorkom, 2010c, chap.10)

Sickness, old age and death are realities of daily life which can remind us of the urgency to develop right understanding, they are like a “goadstick” which can “stir” us. They are the proximate cause of [right effort](#), which is [energy](#) for [mindfulness](#) of the reality appearing at the present moment.

### In a nutshell

You may lose the opportunity completely by postponing.

*Further study:* Cetasikas (Nina van Gorkom, 2010c, chap.10).



Figure 7.2: EMBANKMENT

## Embankment

### Intelligence without ambition

Thought for the day

June 29, 2018

“Intelligence without ambition is like a bird without wings.”  
*Salvador Dali*

The highest ambition within this development of [mindfulness](#) is the realisation of the four noble truths of dukkha (suffering). From Abhidhamma in Daily Life (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.24):

“Here, Lord, robing myself in the forenoon and taking bowl and outer robe I set out for Vesālī on my begging rounds. Then, Lord, I saw a number of Licchavi youths in the gymnasium making practice at archery, shooting even from a distance through a very small keyhole, and splitting an arrow, shot after shot, with never a miss. And I said to myself, Lord: ‘Practised shots are these Licchavi youths! Well practised shots indeed are these Licchavi youths, to be able even at a distance to splinter an arrow through a very small keyhole, shot after shot, with never a miss!’ ”

“Now what think you, Ānanda? Which is the harder, which is the harder task to compass: To shoot like that or to pierce one strand of hair, seven times divided, with another strand?”

“Why, Lord, of course to split a hair in such a way is the harder, much the harder task.”

“Just so, Ānanda, they who penetrate the meaning of: This is dukkha, this is the arising of dukkha, this is the ceasing of dukkha, this is the practice that leads to the ceasing of dukkha, pierce through something much harder to pierce.

Wherefore, Ānanda, you must make an effort to realize: This is dukkha. This is the arising of dukkha. This is the ceasing of dukkha. This is the practice that leads to the ceasing of dukkha.”

### In a nutshell

It is ambitious and a good use of intelligence to understand realities as they are.

*Further study:* Abhidhamma in Daily Life (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.24)



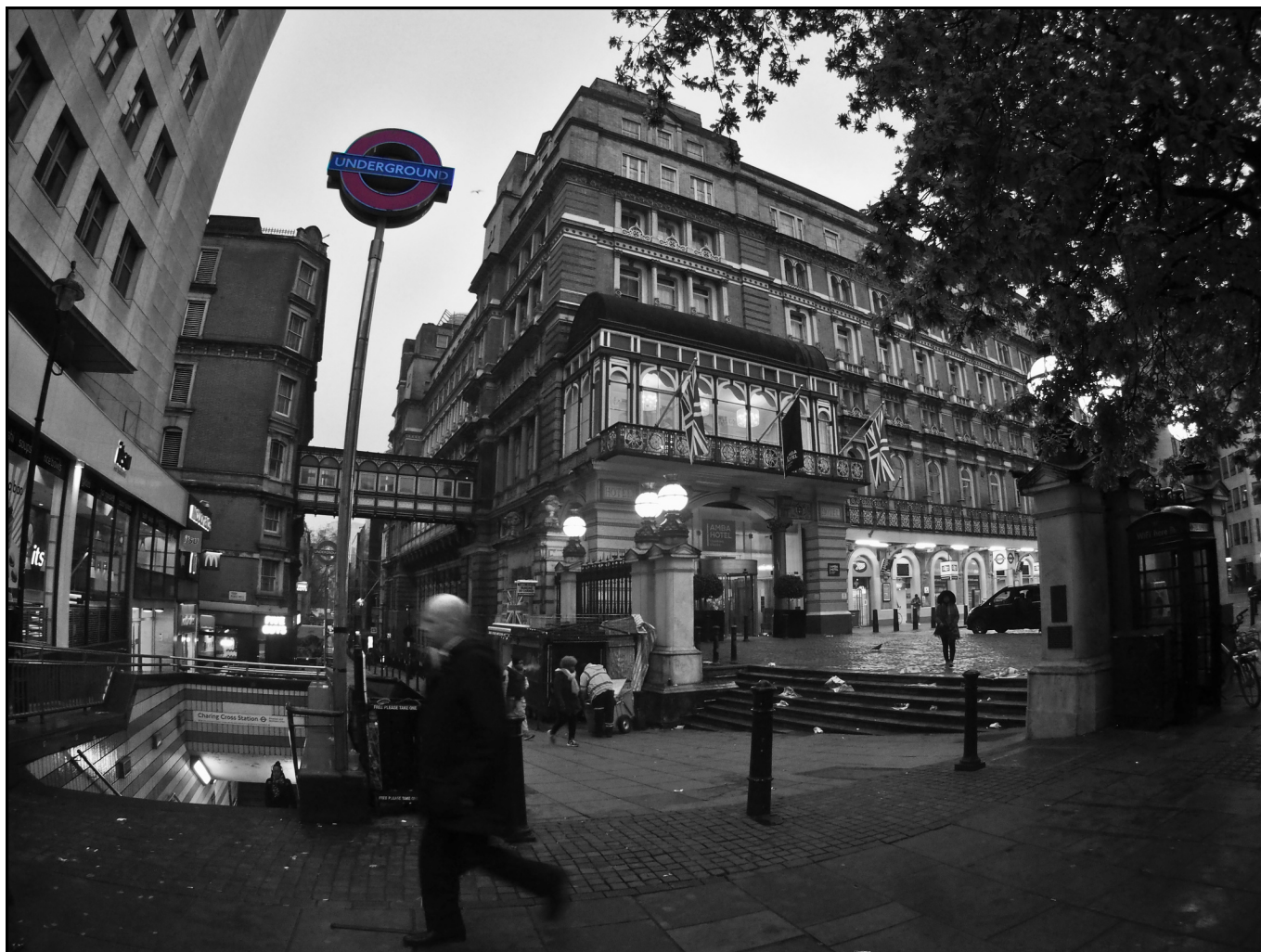


Figure 7.3: CHARING CROSS

# Charing Cross

## A Friend

Thought for the day  
Tuesday 5th June 2018

“Of all the heavenly gifts  
that mortal ones commend.  
What a trusty treasure in the  
world can countervail a  
FRIEND  
Nicholas Grimald”

From Abhidhamma in Daily Life, (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.24):

One cannot attain enlightenment without having cultivated the right conditions. We read in the Kindred Sayings (V, Mahā-vagga, Book XI, Kindred Sayings on Streamwinning, chapter I, paragraph 5, Sāriputta) about four conditions for becoming a sotāpanna (streamwinner). The sutta states:

Now the venerable Sāriputta went to see the Exalted One, and on coming to him saluted him and sat down at one side. To the venerable Sāriputta so seated the Exalted One said this: “‘A limb of stream-winning! A limb of stream-winning!’ is the saying, Sāriputta. Tell me, Sāriputta, of what sort is a limb of stream-winning.”

“Lord, association with the upright is a limb of stream-winning. [Hearing](#) the good Dhamma is a limb of stream-winning. Applying the mind is a limb of stream-winning. Conforming to the Dhamma is a limb of stream-winning.”

The first condition, association with the righteous person, is most important. It would not be possible to find the right path by oneself. Only Buddhas have accumulated such wisdom that they can find the Path by themselves, without the help of a teacher. Other people, however, need the teachings of a Buddha in order to find the right path because ignorance has been accumulated for an endlessly long time. We need association with the right person, the good friend in Dhamma, who can point out to us the right path, because our defilements prevent us from finding the right path. Our friend in Dhamma can encourage us to develop right understanding of nāma and rūpa.

## In a nutshell

The good friend is essential to help us [understand](#) the right path.

*Further study:* Abhidhamma in Daily Life, (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.24)





Figure 7.4: LEICESTER SQUARE

## Leicester Square

### Life is not a fairy tale

Thought for the day

23rd Dec 2015

“Life is not a fairy tale, if you lose your shoe at midnight... You are drunk!”  
*Oval station*

The realities of our life are not stories or fairy tales, they do not depend on belief but can be [insighted](#) through the development of [mindfulness](#). Extract from ‘Abhidhamma in Daily’, chapter 17 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.17).

In being aware of *nāma* (mental phenomena) and *rūpa* (physical phenomena) which appear, such as [seeing](#), [visible object](#), [feeling](#) or [thinking](#), we can prove to ourselves the truth of the Buddha’s teachings; we can prove that the objects experienced through the six doors are impermanent and non-self. The truth will not be known if one follows other people blindly or if one speculates about the truth. We read in the Kindred Sayings (IV, Salayatana-vagga, Third Fifty, chapter V, paragraph 152, Is there a method?) that the Buddha said:

“Herein, monks, a monk, [seeing visible](#) object with the eye, either [recognizes](#) within him the existence of [lust](#), [malice](#) and [illusion](#), thus: ‘I have [lust](#), [malice](#) and [illusion](#),’ or ! the non-existence of these qualities within him, thus: ‘I have not [lust](#), [malice](#) and [illusion](#).’ Now as to that [recognition](#) of their existence or non-existence within him, are these conditions, I ask, to be understood by belief, or inclination, or hearsay, or argument as to method, or reflection on reasons, or delight in speculation?”

“Surely not, lord.”

“Are not these states to be understood by seeing them with the eye of [wisdom](#)?”

“Surely, lord.”

“Then, monks, this is the method by following which, apart from belief a monk could affirm insight thus: ‘Ended is birth, lived is the righteous life, done is the task, for life in these conditions there is no hereafter.’ ”

### In a nutshell

The development of [mindfulness](#) does not depend on belief.

*Further study:* ‘Abhidhamma in Daily’, chapter 17 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.17).

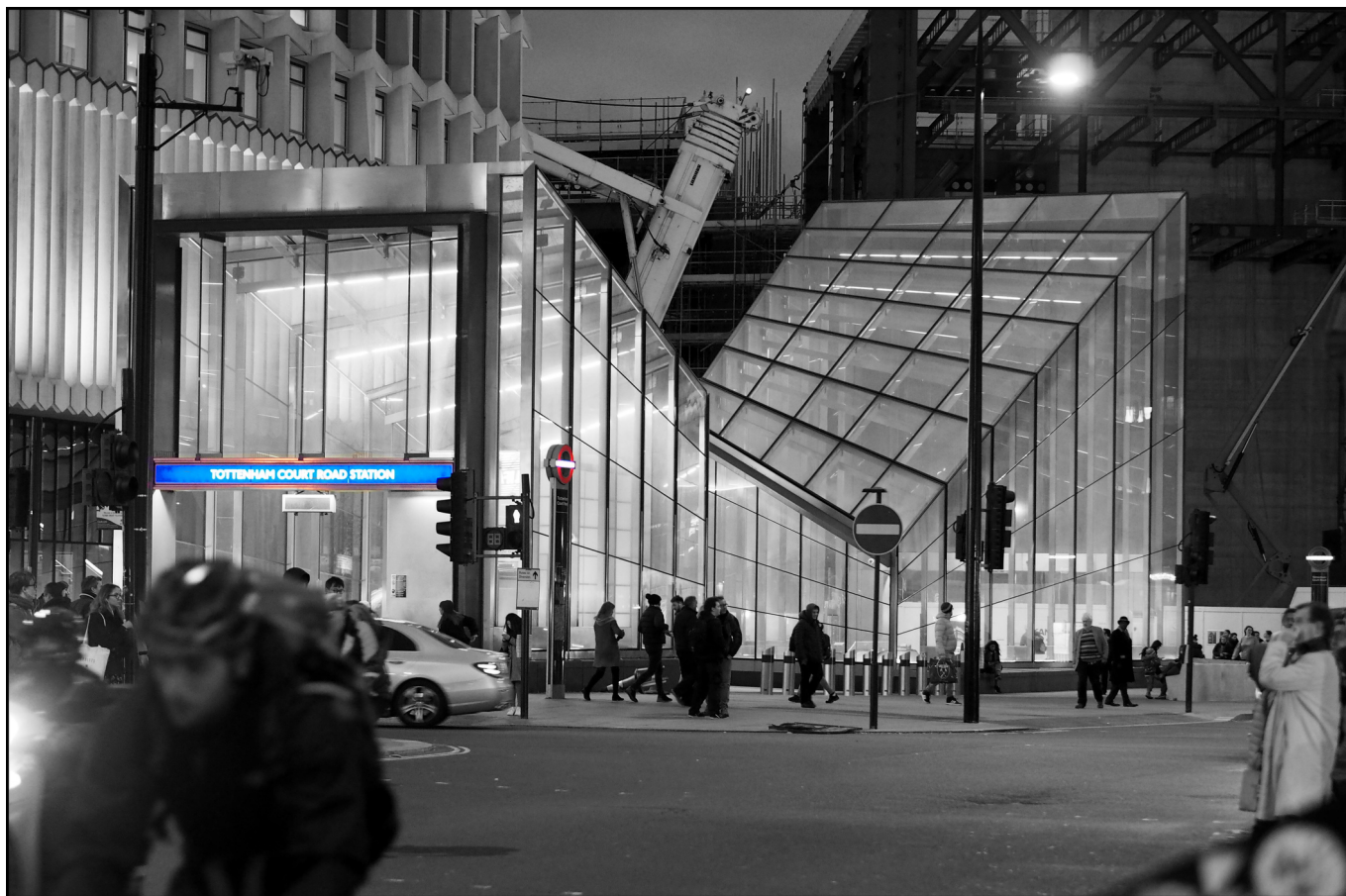


Figure 7.5: TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

## Tottenham Court Road

### You cannot change someone

Thought for the day

23rd October 2018

“You can’t change someone who does not see an issue with their actions.

*Oval Station*

”

We cannot change someone who does not see an issue with their actions, but they may be changed by their own understanding.

**Angulimala** - a story from the Buddhist scriptures on the redemption of a criminal, “the story illustrates” on the down side the danger of having great devotion to the wrong guru and on the up side the possibility of transformation for anyone. To fulfil his commitments under a perverse teacher, Angulimala murdered those unlucky enough to wander into his corner of the jungle on the outskirts of Sravasti. He killed 999 people and made a rosary out of their finger bones. He was prevented by the Buddha from killing his thousandth victim, which he believed would lead him to liberation. After his encounter with the Buddha, Angulimala was eventually able to purify his mind and become an arhat” (See Wikipedia and source). (cited in Limited, 2019)

### In a nutshell

We cannot change people who do not see wrong in their actions.

Even the most hardened of criminals may change through their own understanding.

*Further study:* Angulimala - a story from the Buddhist scriptures (Limited, 2019).





Figure 7.6: GOODGE STREET

## Goodge Street

### Change 365 lives

Thought for the day

4th August 2018

“Do one act of kindness each day of the year and change 365 lives.  
*Oval Station*”

I was once hobbling up the tube stairs after being injured again by Laura (Couch to 5K, 2010). A young man offered to help me up the staircase. Here are some more examples of [kindness](#) on the tube.

- [Giving](#) up your seat for an elderly, disabled, pregnant woman or woman. Not rushing to get a seat. [Appreciating](#) the good [deed](#) of someone who gives their seat to you.
- Not eating curry or energy drinks with powerful [smells](#). Wearing deodorant so you do not [smell](#). Ensuring your phone, earphones are not too loud.
- Apologising to people when you step on their feet.
- Not [staring](#) at women, or [reading](#) someone else's newspaper or [watching](#) a video on their phone.
- Being [kind](#) to staff despite delays or cancellations or reprimands for standing over the yellow line or running. (Did you know staff wear pin-on ties because there have been so many incidents of strangulation by passengers pulling on real ties.)
- Being [kind](#) in thought to rats and mice on the tracks or to someone who [smells](#).
- Not getting into the train when it is already very crowded. Wait for the next train. Not leaning against the doors when the train's in motion. Allowing people to get off the train before getting on. Not running on the platform, with the danger of knocking someone onto the track. Not running to get on the train when the door is closing.
- Not drinking alcohol or taking drugs on or before using the train.
- Offering to [help](#) the parent get their pram up the staircase or the helping the ill passenger get off the train.

### In a nutshell

We should not overlook the opportunity to be kind in our daily life.

*Further study:* See BALHAM.





Figure 7.7: WARREN STREET

## Warren Street

### Possibilities and Opportunities

Thought for the day

Jan 2019

“Life does not provide warranties and guarantees.  
It only supplies possibilities and opportunities.  
Don't miss them, make the most of them.  
*unknown*

”

What is a missed opportunity? Missing the opportunity to [understand](#) the 'real'. And just like our Ford Mustang driver of FINCHLEY CENTRAL, we will fall into the flame of the lamp sooner or later.

They hasten up and past, but miss the real;  
A [bondage](#) ever new they cause to grow.  
Just as the flutterers fall into the lamp,  
So some are bent on what they [see](#) and [hear](#).  
*Udana VI, ix*

(cited in 5 Misconceptions in mindfulness, 2018)

### In a nutshell

Do not miss out on a rare opportunity.

*Further study:* MORDEN DEPOT. Abhidhamma in Daily, chapter 1 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010a, chap.1).





Edgeware Branch



Figure 8.1: CHALK FARM

## Chalk Farm

### A little progress each day

Thought for the day

18th May 2018

“A little progress each day adds up to big results.”  
*Oval*

The below is an extract from Cetasikas chapter 26 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010c, chap.26):

We read in the Middle Length Sayings (II, no. 70, Kīṭāgiri sutta) that the Buddha, while he was in Kāsi, said that enlightenment could not be attained without diligence. He spoke to the monks about people with different accumulations who attained enlightenment, and then said:

I, monks, do not say that the attainment of profound knowledge comes straight away; nevertheless, monks, the attainment of profound knowledge comes by a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual course. And how, monks, does the attainment of profound knowledge come by means of a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual course? As to this, monks, one who has [faith](#) draws close; drawing close, he sits down nearby; sitting down nearby he lends ear; lending ear he [hears](#) dhamma; having heard dhamma he [remembers](#) it; he tests the meaning of the things he has borne in mind; while testing the meaning the things are approved of; there being approval of the things [desire](#) (158) is born; with desire born he makes an [effort](#); having made the [effort](#) he weighs it up; having weighed it up he [strives](#); being [self-resolute](#) he realizes himself the highest truth itself and, penetrating it by means of [wisdom](#), he sees...

The ariyan is often described as a person who has heard much. He has listened to Dhamma and has applied what he has heard. If he had been a passive listener he could not have attained enlightenment. We may wish to reach the goal without cultivating the right cause which leads to the goal. If there is no beginning of the development of [understanding](#) at this moment how can we expect the arising of profound wisdom? Realities such as [hardness](#), [feeling](#) or [sound](#) appear time and again. If one begins to be [mindful](#) of the reality which appears now, one cultivates the right conditions for the growth of right [understanding](#).

### In a nutshell

The development of [understanding](#) is a gradual, long training.

*Further study:* Cetasikas chapter 26 (Nina van Gorkom, 2010c, chap.26)





Figure 8.2: BELSIZE PARK

## Belsize Park

### Great minds

Thought for the day

17th September 2015

“

Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, small minds discuss people.

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

”

What do minds greater than great discuss? Ideas about realities?

From Phrases on Buddhism (Alan Weller, 2010).

- The aim of [thinking](#) about concepts in the right way is to know more about realities.
- If there is no [thinking](#) of this or that concept, can there be a concept at this moment?
- The [understanding](#) that begins to know conditioned realities is also conditioned.
- This moment cannot be lost.
- Some people are afraid to watch TV, but now we are lost in the concepts with no [awareness](#).
- This moment is so real.
- What is experienced is [hardness](#), not a table, but it has to be known by developed [understanding](#).
- [Attachment](#) is only a conditioned moment. [Attachment](#) is like a trap or a bait.
- Nobody can condition any reality.

### In a nutshell

Great minds discuss ideas about realities.

In the Abhidhamma (higher reality) we use words, but the realities which they represent are not words.

We use words to understand realities.

*Further study:* Understanding Reality (Nina van Gorkom, 2010).



Figure 8.3: HAMPSTEAD

# Hampstead

## Eagles fly alone

Thought for the day

21st Feb 2018

“Don't be afraid of being outnumbered. Eagles fly alone. Pigeons flock together.”  
*unknown*

My elder son is doing a PhD in the relationship between quantum mechanics and classical gravity. He says he gets [frustrated](#) when people ask him what he is doing because he cannot express it simply. It would take someone 20 years or so of school and university before they could even begin to understand Einstein's general relativity theory, let alone the work he is doing. He is flying alone in his work on gravity.

In a similar way, the [understanding](#) of the teachings of the Buddha is rare, difficult and takes a long time. It is also compounded by the baggage of preconceptions, misconceptions and political correctness. Therefore, you need to fly alone, like the eagle to pursue this [understanding](#). From The Buddha's Path:

This that through many toils I've on  
Enough! Why should I make it known?  
By folk with [lust](#) and [hate](#) consumed  
This Dhamma is not [understood](#).  
Leading on against the stream  
Deep, subtle, difficult to see, delicate,  
Unseen it will be by [passion](#)'s slaves  
Cloaked in the murk of [ignorance](#).  
*The Buddha (cited from Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.1)*

## In a nutshell

The correct [understanding](#) of the teachings of the Buddha is rare, difficult and takes a long time.

Most people are weighed down by the baggage of preconceptions, misconceptions and political correctness.

You need to go it alone.

*Further study:* Why Einstein never received a Nobel prize for relativity (Clark, 2012).





Figure 8.4: GOLDERS GREEN

## Golders Green

### The road to fate

Thought for the day  
*unknown*

“You often meet your fate on the road you take to avoid it.  
*Jean de La Fontaine*”

Did you choose where you were born? Did you choose to fall in [love](#)? Can you choose to be [happy](#) now? No one can avoid any road because there is no one, just different realities arising by different conditions. From the Kindred Sayings 1, Ch v, 10, (cited in 5 Misconceptions in mindfulness, 2018).

...By whom was wrought this being? Where is he  
Who makes him? Whence doth a being rise?  
Where doth the being cease and pass away?

Then Sister Vajira thought: Who now is this, human or non-human, that speaketh verse?  
Sure it is Mara the evil one that speaketh verse...And the Sister, knowing it was Mara,  
replied in verse:-

Being! Why dost thou harp upon that word?  
Mong false opinions, Mara, hast thou strayed.  
Mere bundle of conditioned factors, this!  
No being can be here discerned to be.  
For just as, when the parts are rightly set,  
The word chariot ariseth [in our minds],  
So doth our usage covenant to say:  
A being when the aggregates are there.  
Nay, it is simply ill that rises, ill  
That doth persist, and ill that wanes away.  
Nought beside ill it is that comes to pass,  
Nought else but ill it is doth cease to be.

### In a nutshell

Nothing can be avoided because each moment is conditioned. *Further study*: The Conditionality of Life (Nina van Gorkom, 2010d)





Figure 8.5: BRENT CROSS

## Brent Cross

### Happiness is a disposition of mind

Thought for the day

18th June 2018

“

People always forget that happiness is a disposition of mind, not a condition of circumstances.

*John Locke*

”

‘If we [understand](#) the cause of [unhappiness](#) we will have less of it, if we don’t we will have more’. [Attachment](#) is a condition for different types of [aversion](#): [anxiety](#), [unhappiness](#), [depression](#). The Buddha’s son, and the Buddha’s wife according to the scriptures could have no more mental suffering of any kind. They had developed the [understanding](#) of reality from the Buddha which then led to the eradication of all [attachment](#). They were ‘sane and immune’.

Sorrow is conditioned by attachment. Let’s consider a few examples of where attachment conditions aversion: The cat jumps in front of the television when ‘Strictly Come Dancing’ is on! Coffee is poured into a tea mug! Say to your wife she looks fat in that outfit! Announce to your teenage son at 8.00pm that you are switching the broadband off. Poundland comes to Tunbridge Wells!

Southern trains seem to have many strikes, none of which cause their passengers unhappiness, it is their own [attachment](#) to getting somewhere.

A few years back I received abuse from a car driver purely on account of the type of car I was driving, a Skoda. What is [heard](#) is [sound](#). [Sound](#) does not [hurt](#) us, it is our own [thinking](#) which [hurts](#) us. The [hurt](#) is conditioned by the intricate web of [attachment](#) that we have accumulated. Including [attachment](#) to the idea of self. Next time you feel [unhappy](#) consider where [attachment](#) might be lurking.

### In a nutshell

The outer circumstances do not hurt us mentally, it is our reaction to them which hurts us.

*Further study:* FINCHLEY CENTRAL



Figure 8.6: HENDON CENTRAL

## Hendon Central

### Wet floor

#### Service Announcement

23rd December 2018

“Wet Floor please take extra care.

TFL”

This is an example of Newton's Third Law in action. In layman's terms, if something goes forwards, something goes backwards. For example. We swim forwards the water goes backwards. We walk forwards, the Earth goes backwards. However, if there is lack of friction, we slip. Around 20% of physics specialists trainee teachers have misconceptions about Newton's third law. 99% of science teacher trainees have a misconception about weight in space (see Introduction on Misconceptions). Difficult concepts get 'dumbed down'. Now consider the quote *The Buddha. (KS 1, V1) (cited in Nina van Gorkom, 2011, chap.1)*

Against the stream (of common thought).

Deep, subtle, fine, and hard to see...

From this quote, we know that 99% plus of Buddhists must have misconceptions. How many misconceptions might there be after 2500 years? 20,000?

Therefore it is our responsibility to consider carefully and check back with the original teachings.

‘Suppose a monk were to say: “Friends, I heard and received this from the Lord's own lips: this is the Dhamma, this is the discipline, this is the Master's teaching”, then, monks, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words. Then, without approving or disapproving, his words and expressions should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas and reviewed in the light of the discipline. If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas or the discipline, the conclusion must be: “Assuredly this is not the word of the Buddha, it has been wrongly understood by this monk”, and the matter is to be rejected. But where on such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas or the discipline, the conclusion must be: “Assuredly this is the word of the Buddha, it has been rightly understood by this monk.” *DN 16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta - The Great Passing, The Buddha's Last Days (Weller, 2018)*

### In a nutshell

We need to check back with the original teachings to verify accuracy. *Further study: 5 Misconceptions in Mindfulness...* (5 Misconceptions in mindfulness, 2018).





Figure 8.7: COLLINDALE

## Collindale

### More to life

Thought for the day

27th May 2012

“There is more to life than increasing it's speed.

Ghandi

”

I have just bought a second hand camera for £39 (Olympus E-PL2). My main camera for most of these tube pictures is an Olympus OM-D M10 Mk11 costing £500. The cheaper camera is slightly slower to use. But then does it really matter? The expensive camera can take more pictures per second than I am able to count. I cannot discern a difference in quality between the pictures produced. I find I am often thinking about gadgetry and this thinking moves me away from what is important. Taking pictures! As the saying goes the best camera is the one you have got with you. If it is expensive or heavy and you leave it at home. What use is it?

In today's world the speed of our gadgets is important to us, our phones, laptops, broadband, trains, coffee machines, cameras, cars. This thinking is constantly moving us away from what is truly important in life. Our parents, sons, daughters, friends and ourselves are being slaughtered one by one by old age sickness and death. It is a matter of urgency to [understand](#) the reality of the present moment. What use is the fast camera if you are dead?

In [bondage](#) to the dear and sweet, many a deva many a man,  
Worn with [woe](#), submit themselves to the Lord of Death's command.  
But they who, [earnest](#) night and day, cast aside the lovely form,  
They dig up the root of [woe](#), the bait of Death so hard to pass.  
*Udana 11, vii (cited in 5 Misconceptions in mindfulness, 2018)*

### In a nutshell

We are mostly occupied by pleasant, unimportant things.  
We will be sooner or later be overtaken by old age, sickness and death.

*Further study:* The Most Important Moment (The most important moment, 2017)





Figure 8.8: BURNT OAK

## Burnt Oak

### Sincere ignorance

Thought for the day

12th August 2011

“Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.”  
*Martin Luther King, Jr*

The Vasa was a Swedish warship (see Figure 7.10) built between 1626 and 1628 (Anon 2019, Vasa). It sank within 20 minutes of its maiden voyage, killing many of those on board. The King wanted the best ever warship. The original designer died and the ship then kept on getting altered.

This ship sunk due to the lack of understanding of the theory of stability, a high centre of gravity.

*This ship was Sweden's biggest ever financial disaster.*

Similarly, we have this ship of mindfulness in the West which will sink those on board sooner or later as it has missed out a large chunk of the theory.

In Buddhism meditation comes from the word *paṭipatti* which means to reach the particular (object). The object to be reached is a word in blue also called, dhamma, abhidhamma, or paramattha dhamma. For example. [Touching](#) is dhamma, [hot or cold](#) are dhamma, [hardness](#) is dhamma. Table, chair, person, hand, foot are not dhammas. This is subtle, deep and not understood by the majority.

[Mindfulness](#) cannot be had by [intention](#). The second factor of the eightfold Path is sometimes translated as [intention \(cetana\)](#) but it is actually [vitakka](#) which translates as [thinking](#). [Mindfulness](#) is under conditions, no one can make it arise.

The Buddha taught that all realities, dhammas, blue words are under conditions, they arise by a cause. Any idea of someone who does something goes against the teachings and goes against the development of [understanding](#). Without firm [confidence](#) in the [understanding](#) of conditions, [mindfulness](#) cannot be developed.

### In a nutshell

No matter you are building a ship, car, or rocket, the theory of stability needs to be understood and applied.

Mindfulness in the West neglects the theory.

*Further study:* 5 Misconceptions in mindfulness and why they may be harming your pupils (Weller, 2018). Digital speech version (YouTube) (5 Misconceptions in mindfulness, 2018). Go to Stockholm and visit the Vasa exhibition.

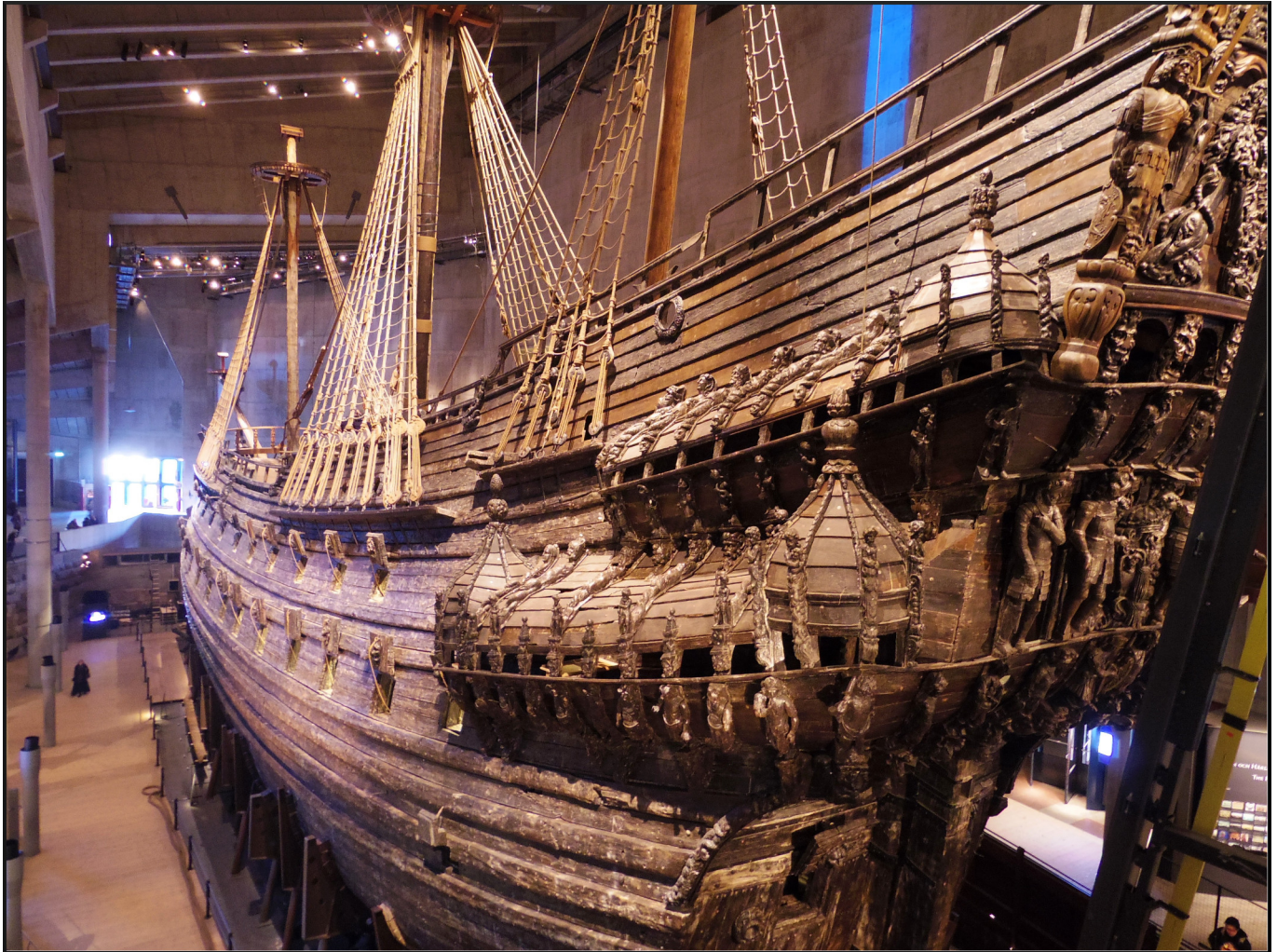


Figure 8.9: The Vasa





Figure 8.10: Vasa is a Swedish warship built between 1626 and 1628. The ship foundered after sailing about 1,300 m (1,400 yd) into its maiden voyage on 10 August 1628. It is pictured in the Vasa Museum, Stockholm. (Wikipedia.org)



Figure 8.11: EDGEWARE

## Edgeware

### Strike while the iron is hot

Thought for the day

April 2017

“Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot;  
but make it hot by striking.

”

*William Butler Yeats*

Our poet, William Butler Yeats clearly knows a bit of physics here. When you strike things there is an energy transfer from kinetic energy to heat energy and so they get hotter.

The meaning here is: do not wait before you act decisively. Who knows what may happen tomorrow or in the next second?

### In a nutshell

Act decisively now!

*Further study:* <https://alwell.github.io/Support/>





# 9

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